

Mongolia



Asian Development Bank
and World Bank

MONGOLIA

COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT

**East and Central Asia Regional Department and
Regional and Sustainable Development Department
Asian Development Bank**

**Environment and Social Development Unit
East and Asia Pacific Region
World Bank**

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This study was prepared by a consultant, Helen T. Thomas, in close collaboration with Shireen Lateef, Principal Social Development Specialist, ADB and Gillian Brown, Senior Social Development Specialist, World Bank. Special thanks are due to Oyunbileg Baasanjav, Gender and Participation Consultant at the World Bank Office, Mongolia (EACMF) who gave tirelessly of her time during missions and reviewing and commenting on the drafts; to Bavuusuren Bayasgalan, Social Sector Officer, ADB Mongolia Resident Mission (MNRM) for her guidance and continuous support; to Barry Hitchcock, MNRM Country Director, and to the staff at MNRM who willingly organized meetings and workshops; and to Darius Teter, Senior Advisor to ADB Vice-President for Operations (2) for making the study possible. Thanks also go to Ian C. Porter, Country Director, to Saha Dhevan Meyanathan, Country Manager, and to the staff at EACMF; and to World Bank peer reviewers Helene Monika Carlsson, Gender Specialist, and Caterina Ruggeri Laderchi, Economist.

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Abbreviations

ADB	—	Asian Development Bank
CEDAW	—	Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
EGSPRS	—	Economic Growth Support and Poverty Reduction Strategy
FHH	—	female-headed households
GDI	—	Gender and Development Index
GDP	—	gross domestic product
GEM	—	gender empowerment measure
MDG	—	Millennium Development Goal
MHH	—	male-headed households
MMRs	—	maternal mortality rate
MOES	—	Ministry of Education and Science
MOFE	—	Ministry of Finance and Economy
MSWL	—	Ministry of Social Services, Welfare and Labor
NCAV	—	National Center Against Violence
NGO	—	nongovernment organization
NPAW	—	National Program on Advancement of Women
NPGE	—	National Program for Gender Equality
NSO	—	National Statistics Office
PLSA	—	Participatory Living Standards Assessment
PRC	—	People's Republic of China
PRG	—	poverty research group
SME	—	small and medium enterprises
SNA	—	System of National Accounts
SSSSP	—	Social Security Sector Strategy Paper
STI	—	sexually transmitted infection
UNDP	—	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	—	United Nations Population Fund
UNIFEM	—	United Nations Development Fund for Women

CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

(as of 6 October 2004)

Currency Unit	—	MNT: Mongolian tugrik
1.00	=	\$ 0.0008319
\$1.00	=	1,202.0

NOTE

In this report, “\$” refers to US dollars.

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Executive Summary

At first glance, there appears to be relative gender equality in Mongolia compared to many other countries. However, evidence from recent studies and a gender analysis of national statistics show that the impacts of the economic transition have been different for women and men. Many families were plunged into poverty during this period as previously protected jobs disappeared. At the same time, social services were drastically reduced so there remained little to alleviate the effects of unemployment. This period of change is creating gender gaps that are new to Mongolia in many areas of economic and social development.

Progress in collecting appropriate data to analyze the nature and intensity of poverty in Mongolia has been made, but there is not yet a clear picture of differences in the poverty of women and men. There is strong evidence from a recent census and the recent Participatory Living Standards Assessment that a disproportionate number of female-headed households are living in poverty and that the proportion is growing. There is, however, little data or poverty analysis of gender differences within poor households. What is clear is that women work longer hours than men do as families rely more on subsistence production and casual employment to meet household needs. This means that women, and to some extent children, are less able to take up alternative economic opportunities and that their health and education are compromised. Maternal mortality rates have remained higher than they were before the economic transition, and other health indicators associated with poverty, such as child mortality, have rebounded. The crude birth rate has fallen sharply which many women ascribe to an increasing reluctance to add the extra burden of motherhood to an already uncertain future.

Migration has been a common response to poverty and has disrupted social networks and left women under additional pressure to manage their multiple responsibilities within and outside the household with little help from traditional support networks (*khureelel*). Initially as livestock herds were privatised, thousands of families that lost their jobs in state-owned enterprises and the government went to rural areas to take up their allocations. These same families were then forced to return to urban areas for employment as three successive harsh winters from 1999–2001 wiped out their herds. Women and girls often led this retreat in the hope that jobs in the service sectors would still be available. Employment opportunities, however, remain limited, and the small, peri-urban *soum* and *aimag* now have a high proportion of increasingly poor *de facto* female-headed households.

Despite the shift to a free market economy and the passing of equity legislation, distortions in the labor market remain. These have led to discrimination against women, a persistent wage gap across all sectors, inefficiencies in investments in education, and the loss of potential contributions from women to economic growth. The growing informal sector has offered new income-generating opportunities to many of the unemployed and underemployed from poor households. Organizations offering financial or other support to micro or small and medium-sized enterprises note that women seem to have acclimatized to the new business environment more readily than men have.

Despite high participation rates of women in formal employment, the proportion of women elected to national parliament fell from 23% in 1990 to 10% in 2000 to only 7% in 2004, a trend reflected at all levels of political decision making. Equal rights are guaranteed under the 1992 constitution supported by a large body of new legislation in economic and social spheres to protect those rights. In practice, however, with few women participating in key decision-making forums, priority is not given to ensuring women can claim their rights or to addressing growing gender gaps in several areas of development.

Implications of Gender Gaps in Economic and Social Development

- ***Employment and the labor market:*** Distortions in the labor market are leading to inefficiencies in investments in education and to the loss of potential contributions from women to economic growth. Measures that can be taken to address gender gaps include (i) challenging gender stereotypes in occupations by targeting employment and skill training for women in nontraditional sectors with potential for growth; (ii) enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation; (iii) building awareness of how to address harassment of women in the workplace; and (iv) increasing skills in analyzing and monitoring gender gaps in government economic policies and programming.
- ***Informal sector and growth of small and medium-sized enterprises:*** Women's contributions to vital sectors of economic activity are increasingly measured and recognized but rarely in the context of their dual burden as entrepreneurs and caregivers. Building skills, access to business knowledge, and credit can be targeted more appropriately for women. Opportunities to increase the return on their labor can be addressed through investments in appropriate technology to reduce the burden of household tasks in rural areas.
- ***Land privatization:*** The current phase of land privatization is highly politicized, but potentially negative gender impacts have not been given priority. A gender analysis of current legislation and how associated regulations are being implemented in practice is urgently required to ensure that land titles do not accumulate disproportionately in the hands of male household heads. It is also important to build understanding of multiple legal regimes linked to land laws that govern access to property such as divorce or inheritance legislation and of how rights can be exercised through this legislation.
- ***Social protection:*** As the government reforms existing welfare systems, it is important that risks of loss or interruption of income and other emergencies are understood within the household. A woman's role in the family as primary caregiver for children and the sick, for example, increases her vulnerability and limits her capacity to cope with emergencies in ways that would not be true for a man. Social protection schemes can be much more efficient if the differences in risks experienced by women and men are accurately understood. Social insurance programs funded by contributions from all forms of employment also have to be geared to the ability of beneficiaries to pay as well as to their respective needs. Women have more frequent interruptions in earnings during their lifetimes than men have because of child rearing responsibilities and hence tend to contribute less to schemes such as pensions. On the other hand, women live longer than men and will make greater demands on pension investments. Reforms have to take these kinds of gender-based differences into account to ensure effective coverage of all citizens in the long term.

- **Education:** The reverse gender gap in enrollment and attendance rates at all levels of education is creating imbalances in achievements with significant economic and social impacts. Poverty is keeping more boys than girls out of school as there are more opportunities for boys to contribute to family income and because herding is traditionally a male occupation. Parents also feel that the education system is failing to prepare students for employment opportunities. Studies need to be conducted that correlate employment opportunities with skills taught in school to identify where quality improvements can be made and how incentives can be developed to raise enrollment and attendance rates for boys. It is also important that the regular curriculum encourages students to challenge gender stereotypes that inhibit both boys and girls from reaching their full potentials.
- **Health:** Gender differences in health outcomes are increasingly evident. Lack of progress in improving maternal mortality rates is widely recognized, but other issues such as the effects of domestic violence, deficient caloric intake, and high levels of anemia on women are not well understood. There is also continuing evidence that poor families are having difficulty accessing health services despite reforms to the health insurance scheme; as primary caregivers in the family, women are disproportionately affected. Continued efforts by government to improve primary health care services should address these problems, but to make programs more efficient and effective, planners need to take a broad view of factors contributing to health outcomes, particularly those factors associated with gender roles and responsibilities. There are also emerging health problems for men such as hypertension and stroke that are related to poor diet, alcohol consumption, and extremely high levels of smoking. Public health campaigns that take a broad view of social/gender as well as biological contributing factors could be used more effectively to reverse these worrying trends.

Other Pressing Concerns Identified by Women

- **Gender-based violence:** An additional impact of the economic transition has been apparent increases in all forms of gender-based violence including domestic violence, sexual harassment in the work place and in public places, and trafficking in women. The Domestic Violence Law was passed in 2004 after extensive public debate, but there is little evidence that the means to enforce it are in place or that there will be adequate resources—human or financial—to implement it effectively. Civil society organizations provide almost all existing services; their advocacy efforts will now have to shift to maintaining the political will to enforce this new law and to build attitudes that no longer condone violence of any kind against women.
- **Women in decision making:** The disappointing reduction in the proportion of women elected to national parliament in 2004 reflects the negative attitudes toward female candidates that limit their capacity to raise sufficient resources or support from within their parties. At all levels of decision making, gender equality is not a priority, and the deterioration of women's economic and political status during the economic transition is rarely discussed outside social development spheres. Civil society organizations concerned with women and with gender equality have led others in championing social justice issues, but even among nongovernment organizations working in community development, neither gender equality

nor the need to address gender gaps as an integral part of poverty reduction are well recognized. Gender stereotypes in the media also contribute to the deteriorating status of women. Some women's organizations are addressing this issue as part of an overall drive to increase women's involvement in decision making.

Enabling Environment

The National Program on Advancement of Women (NPAW) was put in place in 1996 to reflect commitments made by the government to the Beijing Platform for Action and concerns of advocacy organizations regarding women's empowerment. In 2001, the National Council for Gender Equality was established bringing together senior representatives from government ministries and civil society to provide leadership for implementing NPAW. The priorities for action were updated in the National Program for Gender Equality (NPGE) approved by the cabinet in 2002. The Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor is to coordinate implementation of NPGE, but all relevant line ministries are also to be responsible for achieving targets with corresponding indicators of progress that conform with the Millennium Development Goal time frame. However, with no visible leadership from government and no specific budget allocations, there are few programs that contribute to achieving NPGE targets in any ministry.

Government policy to address poverty has been consolidated recently into a more comprehensive approach in the Economic Growth Support and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EGSPRS). This document incorporates NPGE objectives in a short section on gender equality, but progress could be made in many other priority policies. The Poverty Reduction Group of the Ministry of Finance and Economy is currently developing more detailed indicators with specific resources available for integrating gender concerns into monitoring EGSPRS policy areas.

Recommendations

This gender assessment outlines recommendations in many core, priority policy areas to ensure that gender gaps are addressed and women's voices can be heard as decisions are made. This can be done most effectively through systematic mainstreaming of gender concerns into the implementation and monitoring of existing policies. The following areas are of particular significance.

MDGs: Consistent recognition of the importance of narrowing gender gaps to achieve all targets is required, not only to achieve the women's empowerment goal.

EGSPRS: The strategy consolidates priority policy options for poverty reduction for key line ministries. Essential areas to be considered include the following.

- Targeting development programs to those not receiving benefits, most of whom are women, must be done in a gender-responsive manner and must recognize the specific needs of women as well as those of men.

- Gender-sensitive budgeting should be part of performance-based planning and monitoring of government poverty reduction programs. Social and economic factors that influence poverty and marginalization must be assessed and understood.
- Gender distortions in the labor market should be limited to increase women's productivity in the informal sector and their potential to contribute to the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises. Priority measures should include (i) assessing the impact on women and men of the implementation of the current phase of land privatization and taking corrective measures; (ii) improving responses to labor market distortions by tailoring employment services to encourage women's participation in growth sectors; and (iii) establishing women's self-help organizations to deliver programming that combines services for women's economic and social needs.
- Gender gaps in education outcomes should be addressed particularly in building skills to match emerging employment opportunities, improving women's health status overall, and incorporating gender-sensitive social service reforms.
- The 2004 Domestic Violence Bill must be effectively implemented to address gender-based violence in the home and in the workplace.
- Women must be consulted to ensure their needs and interests are addressed in planning policies and in implementing and monitoring programs. This requires proactive measures to increase the number of women participating at all levels of political decision making.
- Gender-sensitive public sector reforms should be implemented by enforcing existing labor legislation that protects women from discrimination in the workplace and promotes employment equity including affirmative action steps to increase the proportion of women in decision-making positions.

NPGE: The program requires increased political momentum for more effective implementation including through the following means:

- overhauling the role of the National Council for Gender Equality and considering new options to provide it high-level and visible support;
- increasing resources and skills in the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare so it can undertake its mandate as lead ministry for NPGE implementation more effectively;
- building partnerships for monitoring progress with the poverty reduction group;
- partnering with women's NGOs to build gender analysis and monitoring capacities in line ministries.

Several donors are already supporting initiatives with different government and nongovernment agencies to implement some elements of the NPGE and gender mainstreaming. However, these efforts remain uncoordinated and limited in scope. Women's organizations have played a major role in motivating the government to address gender inequalities in many aspects of life. Providing examples of gender-responsive, practical approaches to poverty reduction; promoting a rights-based approach to development; increasing the political participation of women; and building the capacity of NGOs would further support their efforts.

From 1921 to 1990, Mongolia was governed under a socialist regime with a centrally planned economy and extensive support from the Soviet Union. Markets for Mongolian products were protected among former Council for Mutual Economic Assistance countries, and costs for extensive social service programs were subsidized through transfers from the Soviet Union. Socialist ideology was superimposed on traditional Mongolian feudal relations. In order to release women from domestic work and maximize their potential contributions to the economy, social services provided child care and maternity leave. Girls as well as boys were educated to the highest levels, and boarding schools were available to families even in the remotest areas. However, despite the formal recognition of women's contributions to the economy and to Mongolia's development, women rarely occupied decision-making positions in the Communist Party and were not considered suitable as community leaders.

The transition to a market economy in Mongolia started in 1990 with a series of economic shocks that placed enormous pressure on all aspects of daily life. This was an unfamiliar phenomenon for Mongolians who lived for generations with expectations of entitlements from the state to protect them. The economic shock of closures of state-owned enterprises was intensified by the sudden withdrawal of social services and corresponding job losses in sectors dominated by the female workforce. Per capita incomes declined rapidly, and inflation became rampant making it very difficult for families to survive. Women increasingly had to fill the gap left by the withdrawal of social services which in turn limited their capacity to take up income generating opportunities. Beyond the sudden loss of economic and social security, there has been an increase in domestic violence, alcohol abuse, insecurity, and family breakups due to migration to seek work. Social development indicators declined sharply during this period and are only now almost recovering to levels enjoyed during the socialist era.

It has been estimated that when the Soviet Union collapsed, Mongolia immediately lost aid assistance equivalent to 30% of its gross domestic product (GDP). As a sparsely populated, resource-based, landlocked country, Mongolia has had to develop assets to trade in the international market place in a very short period of time. There were signs of economic recovery by 1995 as inflation was brought under control and GDP grew. However, these gains were erased by three consecutive years of severe winter disasters or *dzuds* from 1999 to 2001. When the herds from former collective farms were distributed among the population in the early 1990s, many Mongolians chose to return to subsistence herding and leave urban areas. The severe winters, however, tested their lack of experience, and millions of heads of livestock perished. Many rural settlers were then forced to return to urban centers to seek their livelihoods.

A cursory assessment of achievements in Mongolia using indicators like the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Human Development Index suggests that women and men benefit in an equitable manner from development especially when compared to other countries in Asia. The Gender and Development Index (GDI) in 2002 was 0.679, the same as the Human

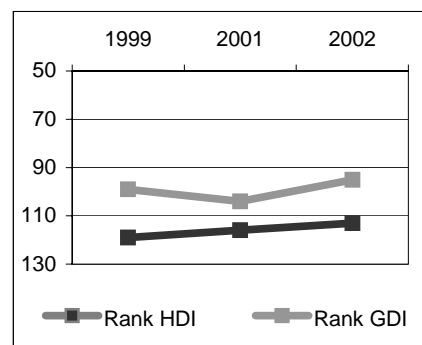
Development Index, which is a highly favorable result and compares to that of countries such as South Africa, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Viet Nam.¹ As illustrated in Figure 1, the ranking of Mongolia among other countries for both GDI and the Human Development Index has also improved in the past few years.

These indicators suggest equal access to government services with high literacy rates, educational achievements, and increasing life expectancy for both women and men. Women's basic human rights are specifically recognized in the 1992 constitution. Women's participation in the labor force is high as would be expected as the country emerges from an extended period of socialist government with a centrally planned economy that placed high priority on full employment for women as well as men.

Despite these gains, some disturbing issues are emerging as the full impact of the economic transition is felt. There appear to be growing gender disparities in key areas of economic and social life. As shown in Figure 2, a disproportionate number of the poor are women, and female-headed households (FHH) are considered to be at much greater risk of being poor, particularly in urban areas. This trend is significant as the number of FHH is increasing. Social values and attitudes from the pre-socialist period persist and influence the roles of women and men even in the new Mongolian society. These attitudes appear to be affecting women's to access the resources and benefits of development. A detailed examination of the gender dimensions of poverty uncovers worrying evidence that women are losing the gains they made during the socialist period.

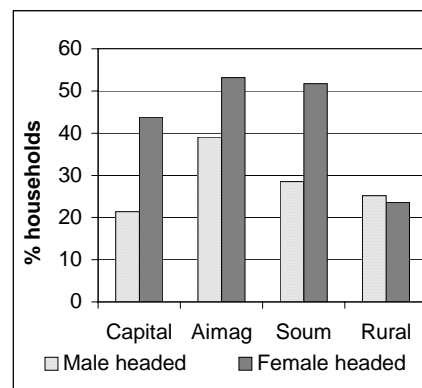
There is growing evidence of distortions in labor markets and of discriminatory hiring practices for both genders that result in the fact that women are unable to profit from the higher levels of education they achieve. As demonstrated in Figure 3, women on average earn less than men and hold fewer managerial or decision-making positions in the private or public sectors.

Fig. 1: Changes in Ranking among other Countries for Mongolia's Gender and Development Index and Human Development Index



Source: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2004, 2003, 2002, 2001 Human Development Reports.

Fig. 2: Incidence of Poverty by Sex of Household Head and Location



Source: National Statistics Office (NSO), Living Standards Monitoring Survey (LSMS) 1998 cited in United Nations (UN) Human Development Report Mongolia, 2003.

¹ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 2004. Human Development Report.

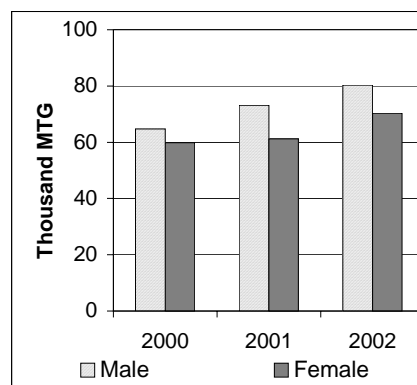
Women's equal participation in the labor market is further undermined by the deterioration of social services such as childcare and kindergarten that were freely available during the socialist period. The extra demands on women's time to attend to family and domestic responsibilities are intensified by an increased reliance on household production for family survival. Recent data demonstrate a sharp increase in the percentage of monthly expenditure that is drawn from household production, much of which requires women's labor, e.g. processing of livestock products and food preparation (see Figure 4). Women also spend considerably more time than men on other household tasks which restricts their ability to take up new or more productive income generating activities.

Educational achievements have also declined considerably during the transition with a narrowing but persistent "reverse gender gap" as lower enrollment rates for boys result in lower educational achievements across all levels of education (see Figure 5). Even for those officially enrolled, non-attendance rates are high for both boys and girls under 8 years of age, and poor attendance and low enrollment of boys increases significantly from age 12 onwards (see Figure 6). This reflects the growing need for boys to contribute to family incomes especially in poor, rural families.

Like employment, women's health has suffered disproportionately during the economic transition. There was a sharp drop in all health indices in the early 1990s. While child and infant mortality rates have improved, maternal mortality ratios (MMRs) have made a less impressive recovery. Women's overall health suffers from high levels of anemia and poor quality emergency obstetrical services, especially in remote areas. There is also mounting evidence that male health is deteriorating as there is a comparatively high incidence of stroke and heart disease from age 40 onwards that appears to be linked to poor diet, extremely high levels of tobacco use, and alcohol abuse. However, no studies have yet tracked gender differences in health risk factors and outcomes.

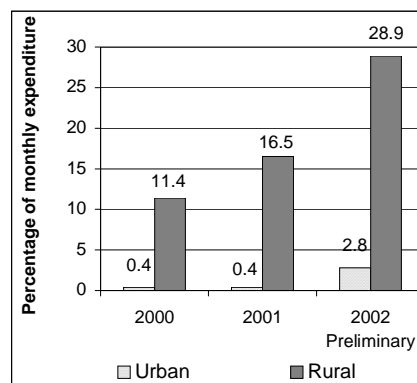
The government of Mongolia adopted the Millennium Declaration that incorporated many international development targets adopted in the preceding decade. The Millennium Declaration

Fig. 3: Average Monthly Salary by Sex in the Fourth Quarter of Each Year



Source: Sample survey of employees and enterprises and organizations, NSO, 2000, 2001, and 2002.

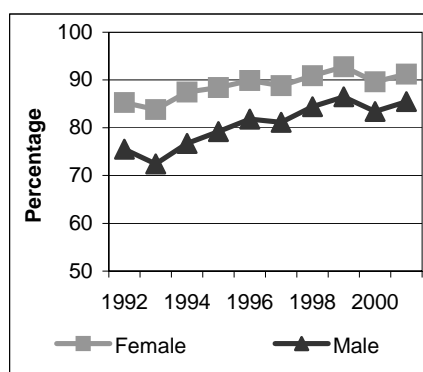
Fig. 4: Proportion of Monthly Expenditure from Household Production



Source: Government of Mongolia, 2003, Economic Growth Support and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EGSPRS).

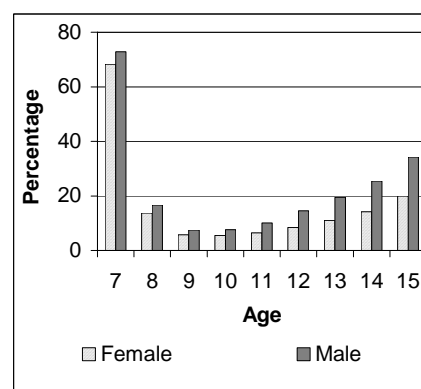
sets out eight concrete goals—the Millennium Development Goals—with corresponding targets for monitoring human development over the 25-year period 1990 to 2015 to provide a common framework for understanding progress on poverty reduction at a national level. Table 1 provides an overview of the specific targets for Mongolia for each of the MDGs and of progress reported up to 2003. Reporting on these targets tends to mask some of the gaps in achievements between women and men in several areas. The main indicator to track gender inequalities in the MDGs is associated with gaps in educational enrollment between boys and girls, but not in other areas identified in the previous paragraphs. Therefore, Table 1 also identifies where gender equality issues are relevant, bringing additional depth to the picture of poverty summarized in the MDG report.

Fig. 5: Enrollment Rates at Primary Levels by Year and Sex



Source: United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM)/UNDP 2002 citing from Ministry of Education and Science data.

Fig. 6: Non-Attendance Levels by Age and Sex



Source: NSO 2001.

One target of MDG 3 tracks women's political participation as a measure of empowerment. In most countries where the majority of women are formally employed, a higher proportion of them are in decision-making positions. In Mongolia, however, the most marked gender gap that has persisted from the socialist era into the transition is women's low participation in political and other forms of decision making. Figure 7 shows how the proportion of women in elected office rose in 1997 and 2000 but fell in 2004 to 7%, far below the MDG target of 30%. While equal rights are guaranteed in the Mongolian constitution and a great deal of legislation ensures women's rights in economic and social spheres, these laws are not effectively implemented. It is suggested that as women are rarely involved in decision making, their concerns are not given priority, and as a result, existing legislation is not enforced.

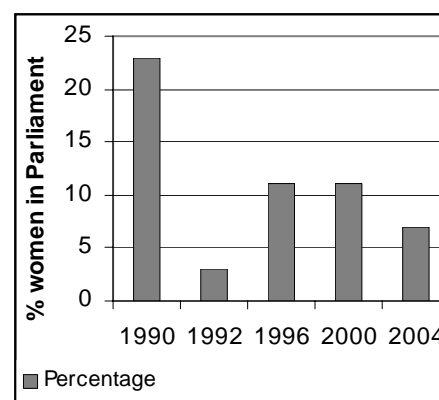
On the other hand, women have organized and led civil society organizations since the early 1990s; there were 78 registered NGOs led by women in 2001. Women's NGOs pioneered the promotion and awareness raising of democratic values and practices. This is reflected in their continued commitment to reinforce and uphold women's rights through advocacy with government and through other forms of civic engagement and rights education on gender equality and related legal reforms. However, other NGOs and civil society organizations in Mongolia have limited experience in including gender analyses in their programming and provide little concrete support for advocacy for women's rights.

The government of Mongolia has recognized the importance of addressing gender concerns and emerging gender gaps. With support and pressure from civil society organizations, a comprehensive National Program for Gender Equality (NPGE) was adopted in 2003, and a commitment has been made to mainstream gender into the overall work of the government and of civil society. However, much remains to be done before these plans and commitments can be fully realized.

It is important to understand how poverty reduction policies and programs may be affecting women as compared to men to ensure that development investments are as efficient and sustainable as possible. Mongolia is one of the few countries where a significant reverse gender gap exists in education. This emphasizes the importance of ensuring that gender analyses seek to understand development outcomes for men and women in order to design and implement poverty reduction programs that will have equitable impacts. The government's capacity to understand and predict the impact of different aspects of poverty in Mongolia is limited as the necessary analytical skills were not well developed during the socialist period. The intensity of the initial transition period led to a mix of "quick-fix" welfare programs that were not well coordinated. In the longer term, these programs have not contributed to significantly limiting the incidence of poverty or its impact on many segments of the population. However, several steps have been taken recently to improve the understanding of poverty among decision makers and to link this understanding to the development of more appropriate and coordinated poverty reduction policies and programs. The Economic Growth Support and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EGSPRS) adopted in 2003 is the first more comprehensive framework to coordinate the government's poverty programming.

Effective implementation of the EGSPRS requires an understanding of how the economic transition has had a negative impact on women and on their status relative to that of men. It is also important to acknowledge that poverty reduction programming may need to be adjusted or revamped to address different and unintended impacts on both sexes. The evidence of gender

Fig. 7 Percentage of Women Elected to National Parliament



Sources: 1997 data Women's Information and Referral Centre from UNIFEM 2001; and 2001 data from Survey "Political participation of Women", GCSD, 2002; published results from 2004 elections.

disparities in Mongolian economic and social life exposes how policies have failed to provide equitable benefits to all citizens. Addressing these gaps also has significant potential to contribute to accelerating economic growth and reducing poverty. For example, the investments made by women in higher levels of education are wasted when labor market distortions block their access to jobs or faltering social services limit their potential to work. Effective, gender-sensitive implementation of the EGSPRS can start to address these inefficiencies.

Many documents are referred to in this gender assessment that provide greater detail on various important aspects of gender disparities and gender inequality in Mongolia. The intention is not to replicate work already done but rather to draw on the findings of these analyses to identify points at which the poverty reduction policy priorities identified by the government—and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and World Bank in their country strategies and programs—have particular significance for gender equality and for narrowing gender gaps. The paper also draws extensively on secondary data as well as interviews conducted during a mission to Mongolia in January 2004.

Table 1: Progress on Targets of Millennium Development Goals 1–7²

MDG	Progress in 2003 Report	Gender Issues
Goal 1: Reduce poverty and extreme hunger. Halve the proportion of people whose income is below the national poverty line. Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. <i>Mongolia's targets:</i> Poverty headcount reduced to 18% by 2015 and prevalence of underweight children reduced to 6%.	Poverty headcount reduced from 36% in 1990 to 35.6% in 2001 Prevalence of underweight children (weight for age for those under five) not changed from 12% in 1992 by 1999	Increasing incidence of female-headed households with greater vulnerability to poverty. Women's contribution to economic growth (e.g. informal sector, small and medium enterprises) not acknowledged. Women have limited registered ownership of private assets. Nutrition and child care remain a woman's responsibility. Increasing demands on women's unpaid labor for household production limits opportunities for income generation.
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education. Ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. <i>Mongolia's targets:</i> Achieve 100% enrollment, attendance and literacy.	Net enrollment in primary education 98.6% in 1990 fell to 88.1% in 2000. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 fell from 96% in 1990 to 83.6% in 2000. Literacy rate of youth aged 15–24 fell from 99% in 1990 to 98.6% in 2000.	Persistent reverse gender gap in enrollment and completion rates. Causes of gender differences in educational achievements not well understood. Falling quality of education and mismatch of skills with education levels in the workforce have different impacts on men and women.

² Government of Mongolia/UNDP. 2004. Millennium Development Goals Report.

<p>Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015. <i>Mongolia's targets:</i> Achieve gender balance in female/male ratios for enrollment in primary and secondary education and in literacy rates.</p>	<p>Gross primary enrollment (female/male ratio) 105.8 in 1990, 96.6 in 2000. Gross secondary enrollment (female/male ratio) 114 in 1990, 121 in 2000. Literacy rate of ages 15 and above (female/male ratio) 97 in 1990, 99 in 2000. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, 49% in 1992 and 47% in 1999 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament was 23% in 1990 but fell to 10% in 2000 and to 7% in 2004.</p>	<p>Distortions in labor market limit women's return on investment in education. Proportion of women in managerial positions limited compared to proportion of women in wage employment despite high levels of education. Discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace not addressed in existing legislation. Attitudes condoning domestic violence persist; implementation of new domestic violence bill will require significant changes in attitude from society, enforcement officials, and judiciary. Declining proportion of women holding political office limits capacity of government policies and programs to respond to women's needs.</p>
<p>Goal 4: Reduce Child mortality. Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015 the under-five mortality rate. <i>Mongolia's target:</i> 29.2 per 1000 live births by 2015.</p>	<p>Under-five mortality rate (per 1000 live births) 87.5 in 1995 improved to 42.4 in 1998. Infant mortality (per 1000 live births) at 64.4 in 1995 improved to 32.8 in 2000. Percentage of children below age 1 vaccinated against measles 85.2% in 1990 improved to 92.4% in 2000.</p>	<p>Declining birth rate influenced by women's attitudes regarding marriage and fertility. Women have made significant contributions to reductions in child mortality despite great pressure on their time for child care and family nutrition. Links between women's status and health outcomes in the family need to be understood.</p>
<p>Goal 5: Reduce maternal mortality. Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015 the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) <i>Mongolia's target:</i> MMR of 50 per 100,000 live births by 2015.</p>	<p>Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births) 199 in 1992 reduced to 158 in 1999. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel - 99.9% in 1990 and 99.7% in 2000.</p>	<p>Reduction in MMRs persistently slower than for other health indicators. Inability of women to command resources within household for their own health influences other contributing factors such as poor quality of services. Men's health also deteriorating e.g. higher levels of hypertension, heart disease among men; causes of different health outcomes for women and men need to be understood.</p>

<p>Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases. <i>Mongolia's targets:</i> Maintain low HIV prevalence and prevalence of tuberculosis (TB) reduced to 4 per 100,000 persons by 2015.</p>	<p>HIV prevalence among 15–24-year-old pregnant women unchanged at 0 since 1990. Contraceptive prevalence rate was unknown for 1990 and was 49.1% in 2000. Prevalence of TB (per 100,000 persons) has increased from 7.9 in 1990 to 12.5 in 2000. Death rates associated with TB fell from 0.5% in 1990 to 0.3% in 2000. Proportion of TB cases detected and cured under DOTS was 100/80 in 2000; previous data unavailable.</p>	<p>Risk factors increasing for migrants exposing their spouses (mostly women) to risk, for example men in military, labor migrants to neighboring countries with high prevalence rates e.g. Russia, some parts of China.</p> <p>Women and men have different biological and environmental factors influencing outcomes for diseases such as TB; other social factors are also relevant e.g. transaction costs to travel for treatment higher for women because of multiple responsibilities. Women will carry burden of caring for people living with HIV/AIDS.</p>
<p>Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability. Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources. <i>Mongolia's targets:</i> Percentage of land area covered by forest restored to 9% by 2015; protected land to maintain biodiversity restored to 30%. Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water. <i>Mongolia's target:</i> proportion increased to 80%. By 2020 achieve a significant improvement in the lives of slum dwellers. <i>Mongolia's target:</i> Proportion of population using adequate sanitation facilities 50%</p>	<p>Nine percent of land area covered by forest in 1990 reduced to 8% in 2000. Land area protected to maintain biological diversity increased from 7% in 1990 to 13% in 2000. Carbon dioxide emissions (ton/person) 4.08 in 1990 and 4.19 in 2000. Proportion of population using improved water source increased from 55% in 1990 to 60% in 2000. Proportion of population using adequate sanitation facilities increased from 22% in 1990 to 25% in 2000.</p>	<p>Land management decisions at the community level do not necessarily reflect the needs of women despite their roles in rural household production systems. Women are primarily responsible for managing water resources for household use yet may not actively participate in decision making either in the household or the community regarding water resource improvement and management. There is higher proportion of poor female-headed households in urban areas of traditional Mongolian portable houses (<i>ger</i>) living with limited access to adequate sanitation or resources to improve living conditions. Women have demonstrated strong commitment to improving the environment in urban <i>ger</i> area improvement projects; this energy can be harnessed to accelerate improvement in overall living conditions in slum areas.</p>

Measuring poverty in Mongolia has been challenging for both the government and for development partners. Criteria have changed making it impossible to track trends from one set of data to another. A more complete picture is, however, emerging of the incidence, severity, and depth of poverty both nationally and regionally in recent years based on improvements in survey and analytical techniques. Gender is also starting to be incorporated into the monitoring of poverty.

A. Poverty in Mongolia

The characteristics of poverty in Mongolia are somewhat unique. For example, compared to other countries with similar income levels, poor herding families are not generally malnourished although overall caloric intake is dropping, and the unemployed and those employed in the informal sector are highly educated even in rural areas. There are therefore many challenges to understanding the vulnerabilities and risks associated with poverty and with the means for securing sustainable livelihoods.

1. Income/ Consumption Poverty

Income/consumption poverty measures are the most commonly used in Mongolia. In the 2003 EGSPRS, poverty measures are taken from the Living Standard Measurement Surveys conducted in 1998 that used an expenditure-based poverty line that provided a much higher estimate of poverty than was generally accepted. The 1998 survey found that overall, 36% of the total population (39% urban and 33% rural) lived in poverty whereas the National Statistics Office (NSO) estimates were approximately 23%, and social welfare program parameters yielded a 20% estimate. The minimum living standard established by law in 2000, on the other hand, is 14,700–19,300 MNT; households with per capita incomes below 40% of the minimum living standard are deemed to be extremely poor. This produces a different estimate of the proportion of the population living in poverty. Initial analysis of 2000 census data seems to point to an approximate increase in poverty of 3%.

It is difficult to assess the proportion of the poor who are women from the national data available. Raw data sets from various recent surveys are disaggregated by sex, but findings from poverty analyses do not include gender differences. The GDI identifies a gap in GDP per capita (purchasing price parity in US\$) between men at \$2303.20 and women at \$1950.70 with wide variations across the country.³ These data, however, are based on a crude estimate of the proportion of female non-agricultural wages to male non-agricultural wages; the female and male shares of the economically active population; the total female and male population; and GDP per capita. The intention is to provide a very broad comparative indicator between women and men rather than accurate statistics on women's actual incomes that can be assessed against poverty lines.

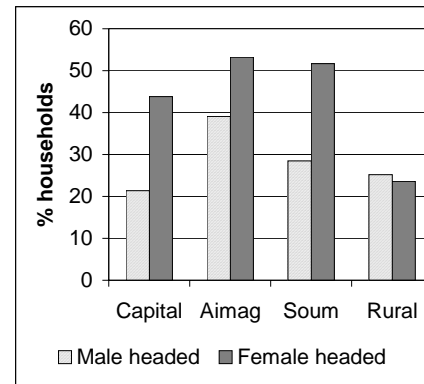
³ The Government of Mongolia and UNDP Human Development Report 2003 contains detailed tables by region of GDI and gender empowerment measure indices.

The more commonly used data to indicate the magnitude or characteristics of women's income poverty in general is based on information on FHH. There is little understanding of the conditions of women in poor, male-headed households (MHH). It is generally assumed that all members of household experience poverty in the same way, but these assumptions have been challenged in many studies.⁴ As new survey tools are being developed in Mongolia, gender factors need to be taken into account in all households. In the absence of specific data, however, the condition of women who are heads of households can provide insights into factors that influence economic and social development common to all women.

The presence of two adults who are either earning or contributing labor to subsistence production is a key factor in the capacity of households to remain above the poverty line according to the 2000 Participatory Living Standards Assessment (PLSA) and other studies. This means that all single-parent households are vulnerable to poverty, but single male-headed households are very uncommon. On the other hand the percentage of FHH has increased from 9% of total households in 1995 to 16% in 2000.⁵ The EGSPRS identified that while FHH make up 12–13% of total households (based on 1999 data), they comprise almost 25% of very poor households. The 2002 census data, however, indicate that the incidence of poverty is less for FHH than for MHH where the head is under 35 years, but from 35–40 years onwards, FHH are poorer. The inconsistency in findings from different national surveys points to a need for more extensive study of the gender differences in poverty levels within as well as among households.

Other data (see Figure 11 on page 15) suggest that FHH tend to be concentrated in small urban centers called *aimag* and *soum* where rural sex ratios of 115 men per 100 women for the age group 15–19 fall to 106 men per 100 women for ages 30–34.⁶ This reflects a pattern of migration of rural women and girls seeking alternative employment in these small centers where government services requiring female workers were located during the pre-transition period.⁷ Many of these women register as *de facto* FHH. Herding requires intensive labor, and most single women, even those with male children, find it impossible to subsist if they are abandoned or widowed and so move to urban centers to find alternative incomes. Job opportunities are now very limited as government services have been cut, and these households have become poorer as a result. Figure 8

Fig. 8: Incidence of Poverty for Female-Headed and Male-Headed Households



Source: NSO Living Standards Measurement Survey 1998 cited in UN Human Development Report Mongolia, 2003.

⁴ See, for example, the World Bank, 2002, *Engendering Development Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice* among many other studies.

⁵ UNIFEM/UNDP 2002, p. 99 citing sources from LSMS 1998, NSO 2001 data and Government of Mongolia and UNDP 2003, *Human Development Report*.

⁶ NSO and World Bank. 2001. *Mongolia, Participatory Living Standards Assessment 2000 (PLSA)*

⁷ Ibid.

shows the differences in incidence of poverty between MHH and FHH in urban and rural areas of Mongolia.

While the number of single-parent FHH with children under 16 has almost doubled since 1993, divorce rates have remained steady. The number of women receiving child support from ex-husbands and/or fathers has halved.⁸ In the PLSA, some women said that they might prefer to live without male partners who are alcoholic, violent, or not working as they are a burden on the rest of the household. So, while economically FHH may be insecure, other quality of life indicators may be more important⁹.

The age composition of households is also a factor in poverty. Elderly relatives in a household (who are often women because of their greater longevity) who receive pensions, even if very meager, can contribute significantly to cash income when there is very little available for subsistence herding households. Children, on the other hand, bring economic stress, particularly school age children because of boarding fees, books, and other expenses. Children, particularly boys, may be pulled out of school to assist in household production, and in some cases children may work for cash or in-kind payment in other households.¹⁰

2. Other Measures of Poverty

The capability approach to assessing poverty looks beyond income to include good health, education, access to social capital, political participation, and security as measures of well being.¹¹ The government uses these measures to identify six groups as most vulnerable to poverty and hence eligible for social welfare: i) children who have lost one or both parents; ii) physically disabled persons; iii) elderly persons living alone; iv) FHH; v) households with more than four children and hence a high dependency ratio; and vi) some of the unemployed. The capabilities required to achieve well being are based on socially defined standards that influence many aspects of intra-household relations including how income may be distributed among family members in order to achieve certain goals.

Differences in how women and men describe well being beyond income were highlighted in the 2000 PLSA findings. Alcoholism, crime, and domestic violence were identified by women in particular as symptoms of poverty as well as limitations on economic opportunity.¹² The study also noted that in their perceptions of well being, women tended to emphasize the ability to bring up children well, good health, having responsible husbands, and social standing or respect. Men, on the other hand, placed more importance on material well being demonstrated by owning vehicles, by herd size, and by having a good job.¹³ It may be extrapolated, therefore, that women tend to dedicate a higher proportion of household income to good health and social well being of the

⁸ Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and UNFPA. 2000. *Reproductive Health, Gender and Rights in Mongolia*.

⁹ NSO and World Bank. 2001. PLSA.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ ADB. 2002. *Second Health Sector Development Project Mongolia, PPTA 3750-MON, Social Impact Assessment Report*.

¹² NSO and World Bank. Op. cit.

¹³ Ibid.

family compared to their husbands. Similar differences in spending patterns by gender are borne out by studies in other countries.¹⁴

Participatory poverty assessments have also been used to measure deprivation. In recent years there has been growing recognition of the importance of understanding how communities and individuals within communities perceive poverty in their own very specific contexts. This approach not only gives voice to those rarely consulted when macro poverty reduction policies are developed but also provides an opportunity for the most marginalized to explore and analyze their own circumstances. The poverty reduction strategy papers developed with assistance from the World Bank and ADB in recent years have stressed the use of such instruments for program planning and budgeting to provide a more detailed picture of the complexity of poverty and to understand the priorities of those most affected. The PLSA conducted in 2000/01 provides initial data but needs to be repeated to provide information on trends and changes.

The collection and analysis of data has broadened over the past 10 years in Mongolia to combine all these approaches in order to understand the full extent and dynamics of poverty and socioeconomic changes during the economic transition. While changes in indicators, benchmarks, and definitions have made it more difficult to compare data from different years, there is a broad consensus that efforts must be made to identify and understand how to adjust poverty reduction programming so it is as equitable and effective as possible and eliminates disparities including those between women and men. Gender differences are increasingly evident in the data, but there is still uncertainty on their significance or on what policies and programs should address them.

B. Gender and Poverty

1. Time Poverty

The economic transition has intensified demands on women's labor, particularly household labor. This is perceived by women as another manifestation of poverty that creates additional barriers on their ability to take up cash income generating opportunities and to find time for self-improvement and relaxation. This pressure on time comes from several sources.

First, with sluggish economic growth and growing poverty, many families and individuals have had to find alternative means of survival. Significant contributions to incomes are coming from the informal economy, from bartering services, and from simultaneously relying on several income sources at once. Figure 9 shows the increase in the consumption of foodstuffs produced by households. Subsistence household production is labor intensive and is done primarily by women using inefficient technologies.

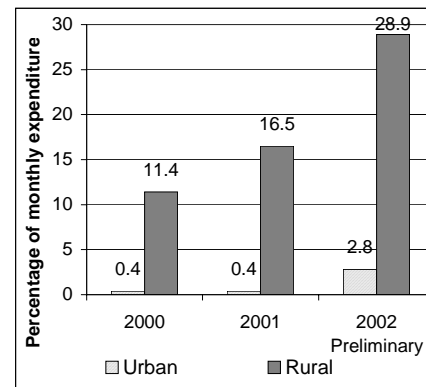
¹⁴ For example in: World Bank. 2001. *Engendering Development Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice*.

The amount of cash exchanged in the rural economy is falling, and credit is hard to find. The proportion of in-kind household expenditures cited in the EGSPRS also shows an increase in food consumption from household farms, (14% increase between 2001 and 2002) in urban and rural settings (57% increase between 2001 and 2002¹⁵), and increases in in-kind contributions to household incomes. For example, the incidence of relatively wealthy households using child labor from poorer households for payment in kind has increased in rural areas by 51% in recent years¹⁶ according to one survey. As noted previously, boys are more frequently kept out of school to work than girls are.

Second, changes in the types of family labor required for household agricultural production have also occurred since the 1990s and are adding demands on the labor of women and girls. During the socialist period, collective production systems relied on labor specialization among different households. Now, individual households have to carry out all tasks requiring new skills, technologies, and unpaid labor from family members. The most recently released data from the Labor Force Survey with Child Activities Module for 2002–2003 from NSO¹⁷ reveals that women spent 37 hours on average during the reference week on identified household tasks (including cooking, cleaning, sewing, caring for old/sick/infirm, fetching water and fuel, household repairs, and “voluntary/ community services without pay”), while men spent only 19 hours on average. Comparisons were also made between rural and urban areas. Teenaged urban males spent fewer than 17 hours on non-economic activities, and their rural counterparts spent fewer than 18. Girls from the same age group, on the other hand, spent 21 hours in urban areas and up to 30 hours in rural areas on household tasks.¹⁸

Women have demonstrated that demands on their time can be relieved to some extent by sharing tasks through social networks particularly in times of family crisis like sickness. However, kinship networks are weakening, and people’s ability to help each other has been declining according to the 2000 PLSA. Other reports stress that relationships among family members and other “*khureelel*” remain important.¹⁹ *Khureelel* literally means social circle and includes both

Fig. 9: Proportion of Monthly Expenditure from Household Production



Source: EGSPRS citing from Household Income and Expenditure Survey for 2002.

¹⁵ Government of Mongolia. EGSPRS.

¹⁶ Government of Mongolia/ UNDP. *Human Development Report 2003*.

¹⁷ Government of Mongolia, NSO. *Labor Force Survey with Child Activities Module for 2002-2003*. Draft Survey Report of all four survey rounds conducted during October 2002 –September 2003, dated April 2004, final report yet to be released.

¹⁸ See table with average number of hours engaged in non-economic activities by sex, age and location in Appendix 2.

¹⁹ Population Training and Research Center and UNDP. 2003. *Urban poverty and In-migration* draft dated April 2004 and yet to be released.

blood relations and so-called “dry” relations, i.e., old classmates or parents’ old classmates or friends of the family. Both networks remain equally binding if assistance is requested in times of need.

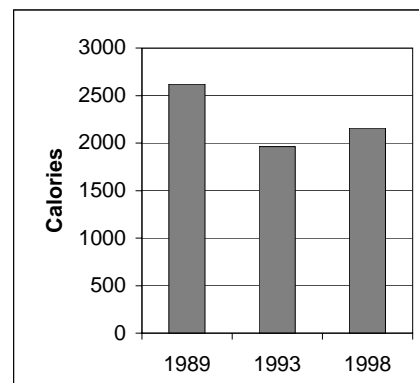
New migrants to urban areas may not have access to *khureelel* which may affect women more adversely than men because of their longer working days and added domestic responsibilities. FHH may rely on these networks more than other households, but little is written regarding gender differences in the way these networks act as social safety nets. The importance to new migrants of *khureelel* to build social capital is noted in the recent study by the Population Training and Research Center of the Mongolian National University and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on urban poverty and in-migration. Unfortunately this study does not disaggregate its findings by sex. The 2000 PLSA argues that growing inequality has modified the nature of kinship networks turning them more into patron/client relations as poorer relatives in rural areas offer their labor to their wealthier kin in exchange for food and other goods.²⁰ These are further aspects of social networking that require detailed, gender-sensitive study to facilitate the development of appropriate poverty reduction policies and programming.

2. Social Development Indicators

Poverty is also an increasingly important determining factor for access to health and education services. This is a significant change from the socialist period. Charges for accommodation and food at boarding schools have been introduced, and user fees are charged for health and insurance services. There seems to be a growing link between school drop-out rates, particularly for boys, and poverty as children are kept back from school to save money and to contribute to family income. Herding is traditionally a male occupation which contributes to the lower enrollment rates of rural boys. Similarly, those least likely to use health services are from the poorest households. Government-funded social and welfare services are failing to respond to these new problems, especially since cost cutting in these sectors is vital for maintaining fiscal stability.

Malnutrition levels have never been high in Mongolia, but the overall average consumption of calories has fallen and has not regained pre-transition levels (see Figure 10). Consumption of protein, energy nutrition, and micronutrients has fallen.²¹

Fig. 10: Calorie Intakes per Person in Mongolia since 1989



Source: UNIFEM. 2001.

²⁰ NSO and World Bank. Op. cit.

²¹ UNIFEM. 2001.

National averages mask the difficulties faced by poor families, especially those in urban areas with limited means to produce their own food to meet basic requirements. Persistently high levels of anemia among pregnant women and other overall indicators point to more generalized problems of poverty beyond those of lack of income that will limit the capacity of Mongolia to achieve the MDGs by 2015. Among the poor, women are bearing the brunt of the dislocations from economic transition.

3. Migration

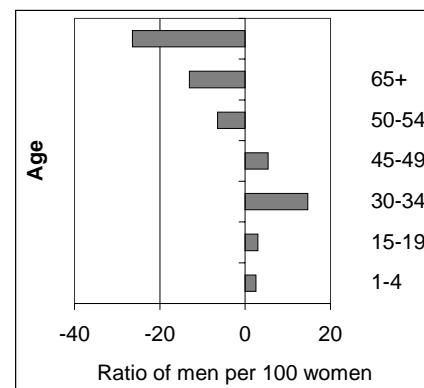
Migration is one response to poverty. Initially in the economic transition, many of the newly unemployed and thousands of urban dwellers took advantage of household allocations of livestock as herds were privatized in rural areas. Deteriorating terms of trade and the three disastrous winters of 1999, 2000, and 2001, however, caused many herders to abandon subsistence livelihoods and return to small urban centers (aimag and soum) or to the capital to seek employment. By 2000, some 21% of the total population had recently moved.²²

Migration from rural areas has been led by women and their daughters who are the first in a family to seek employment in aimag and soum centers primarily in health and education. Imbalances in sex ratios in rural and urban areas demonstrate this trend, particularly for the age group 15–34 years. Figure 11 illustrates these imbalances. The greater longevity of women changes the ratio for the age group of 50 years and older only.

There is increasing evidence that rural-urban migration has intensified poverty especially among women and *de facto* FHH in the soum and aimag urban centers (as shown in Figure 8 on page 10) because employment is not available and social services are stretched. Many migrants settle in peri-urban *ger*²³ areas forming temporary suburbs that often become permanent but that lack services such as water, sewage disposal, or regular waste collection. Heating may be from stoves burning only whatever fuel can be scavenged. The pressure on employment and services is most intense in the capital Ulaanbaatar that grew by more than 27% between 1990 and 2000. Several projects have addressed poor living conditions in ger areas in Ulaanbaatar and larger aimag centers as studies correlate poverty and lower social development indicators to areas with high numbers of recent migrants.

Women have to depend on informal social networks as they cope with increased burdens of child and other family care as discussed previously. Social networks for new migrants take time

Fig. 11: Ratio of Men per 100 Women (00) by Age Groups in Rural Areas



Source: NSO 2001.

²² Government of Mongolia and UNDP. *Human Development Report 2003*.

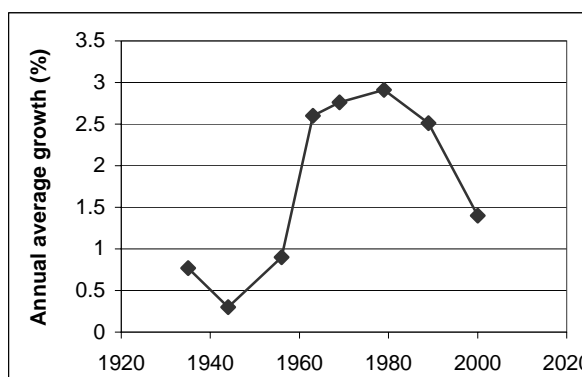
²³ *Ger* are the traditional Mongolian portable, circular houses.

to develop, however, although there is some evidence that many decisions on where to migrate may depend on potential access to khureelel. As a high proportion of poor migrants rely on traditional networking, it is important to understand how government policies and programs can strengthen it. These networks can also be important for developing more cooperative approaches to economic empowerment. Existing studies of migration patterns, social capital, and links to poverty have not incorporated a strong gender analysis despite evidence from other data that the dynamics and impacts of migration vary considerably between women and men and between MHH and FHH. Such analyses would improve programs for women.

Evidence also points to growing numbers of people migrating out of Mongolia to seek work though the government does not consistently maintain data at exit points so it is not possible to even estimate the figures. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many migrants work illegally. A recent estimate found approximately 20,000 illegal Mongolian workers in South Korea. They may be in danger from human traffickers or other forms of exploitation. International migration can be beneficial in times of unemployment and slow economic growth, not only for individuals but also for the communities they leave behind. The government should consider how it can promote safe migration and use remittances to maximize development.

The fall in the population growth rate is another dramatic response to the economic shocks of transition. The crude birth rate fell from 36% in 1989 to 20% in 2000,²⁴ a drop of 44% which more than offset the fall in the infant mortality rate. Many attribute this decline in part to the response of women to the sudden lack of government social services for reproductive health combined with a lack of economic resources and opportunities. Bringing up “good children” is an important indicator of well being for women, so the choice of having fewer, if any, children can be understood given the risks presented by current conditions.

Fig. 12: Average Annual Population Growth Rate



Source: NSO data cited in UNIFEM 2002.

As birth rates fall, women will be less concerned with child care and will want to reach their full economic and social potential. Policies that assume a woman’s primary role is mother and caregiver may not respond to single women. These demographic changes will also lead to an aging population with all the corresponding problems of increased costs for health and social services in the long term. A gender analysis is necessary to understand the causes of the fall in the birth rate and to draft suitable policies and programs for an aging population.

²⁴

UNIFEM/ UNDP. 2002.

Despite overall improvement, gaps in GDI between urban and rural areas remained constant in 2000 and 2002 at 0.712 to 0.631 and 0.723 to 0.637 respectively. Trade imbalances have worsened reducing income and quality of life in rural areas as there is high demand for low cost products from foreign markets and rural producers are forced to sell at lower and lower prices. State farm closures have reduced the land in production by a factor of five despite the fact that the share of agricultural employment of the total labor force increased from 32% in 1989 to 49% in 2000. As a result, the contribution of this sector to GDP declined rapidly from 40% in 1999 to 21% in 2002 with corresponding reductions in incomes.²⁵

Poverty in urban areas has increased though it is different from poverty in rural areas. The 1998 Survey found that 57% of the poor lived in urban areas, 26% of which were in the capital.²⁶ Many of the smaller, remote aimag and soums are, however, also counted as urban, so it can be argued that the causes of urban poverty are related to the pressures on rural livelihoods that are forcing many women in particular to migrate to small urban centers.

²⁵ Government of Mongolia and UNDP. 2003. Op. cit.

²⁶ Ibid.

The Economic Growth Support and Poverty Reduction Strategy adopted in 2003 is the first more comprehensive framework to coordinate the government's poverty programming. Effective implementation requires an understanding of how the economic transition has had a negative impact on women and on their status relative to that of men. It is also important to acknowledge that poverty reduction programming may need to be adjusted or revamped to address different and unintended impacts on both sexes.

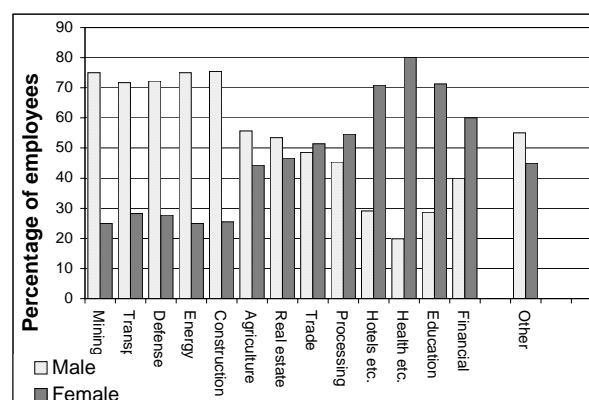
A. Women in the Formal Economy

The most recent data from the NSO draft Labor Force Survey 2002–2003 indicate that women make up 48% of the economically active population though definitions of economically active have changed almost every year as surveys seek to comply more fully with those recognized internationally. Changes in the composition and conditions of the labor market have been a marked feature of the economic transition in Mongolia and have had significant but different impacts on women and men. Before transition, state entitlements and benefits released women from domestic responsibilities to maximize their economic contributions through employment. These entitlements also established gender differences in many aspects of the labor market. The retirement age was younger for women, and the division of labor within sectors was based on what was considered to be appropriate work for women and men. Even though market forces are now supposedly driving most aspects of labor, women's employment and their potential to maximize their income earning opportunities are still influenced by gender stereotypes, and limited state support for family responsibilities reduces their potentials to join the workforce.

1. Division of Labor and Gaps in Salaries and Wages

Gender bias in the division of labor between women and men in different sectors in the formal economy is pronounced in Mongolia. As illustrated in Figure 13, male workers predominate in the sectors identified in the EGSPRS for economic growth, i.e., mining and extraction, energy, construction of infrastructure, and the transport sector. The gender balance is more equitable in the agriculture sector. Women are the majority of the workforce only in the processing and tourism (hotel, restaurant) sectors where seasonal work predominates, and many are still concentrated

Fig. 13: Employment by Sector and Percentage of Male and Females



Source: Data taken from NSO Report of Population and Housing Census 2000.

in sectors that are contracting or that will remain static, e.g. health and social services and education.

Despite their higher educational levels, Figure 14 shows that there is a persistent wage gap between men and women. Women earned on average 8% less than men in 2000 which increased to 19% in 2001 and fell only slightly to 14% in 2003.

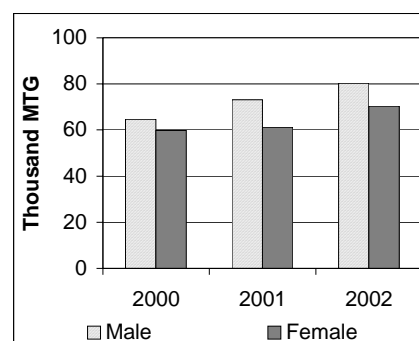
Salary levels are higher in sectors like mining and transportation where men predominate than they are in sectors like health and education where the workforce is mostly female. Furthermore, despite lower levels of education and training, men hold a significantly higher proportion of managerial positions even where there are high concentrations of female workers. For example, there are few female school principals although women make up 75%²⁷ of the educational workforce. Figure 15 shows data from a sample survey of employees and organizations carried out by NSO for 3 years (2000–2002) that found that while 48% of all employees were women, they held only 35% of the managerial positions. (See Annex 2 for full data.)

The salaries of men in managerial positions were almost twice those of women in the same positions according to the NSO survey. There was also some evidence that men received higher salaries for the same jobs and levels despite prohibitions against wage discrimination by sex under the current labor law in Mongolia.²⁸ These wage disparities illustrate distortions and discrimination in the labor market that undermine the potential contributions that women could make as half the workforce. These gaps also represent poor returns on of the extra investment in women's education.

2. Unemployment, Underemployment, and the Mismatch of Skills and Jobs

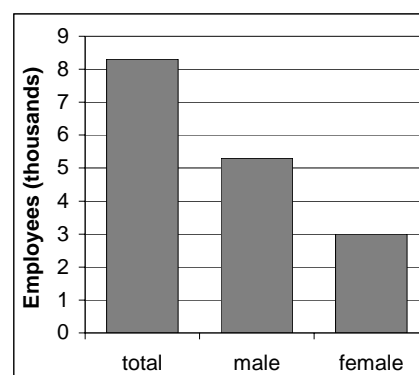
Sharp increases in unemployment have been a strident feature of the transition. In 2002, 30,900 people registered as unemployed of which 16,800 (54%) were women. Unemployment rates

Fig. 14: Average Monthly Salary by Sex in the Fourth Quarter of Each Year



Source: Sample Survey “Workforce and Salary” NSO cited in GSDC report, 2003.

Fig. 15: Employees Holding Managerial Positions by Sex



Source: Sample Survey of Employees in Enterprises and Organizations, NSO, 2000, 2001, and 2002.

²⁷ UNIFEM. 2001.

²⁸ Analysis presented in draft study by the Mongolian Statistical Association in 2004 *Gender and Poverty Analysis of the Public Budget in the Employment Sector* for UNDP.

vary a great deal, however, depending upon how they are measured. Government rates are based on the number who register at local government employment offices every 3 months. These rates represent 4% (5% female and 4% male in 2000) of those seeking work. Trends since 1992 have shown consistently higher levels of unemployment among women with the difference at its widest in 1994 when 10% of women and 8% of men registered as unemployed. In 2000, all people who had not worked at least 1 hour in the week before the census and who said that they were looking for work were counted as unemployed. That measure yielded a rate of 17% (18% male and 17% female).²⁹

In the most recent NSO Labor Force Survey with Child Activities Module for 2002–2003³⁰ (yet to be released but available in draft form), the unemployment rate for those age 15 years or older was 14%. Unemployment rates were slightly higher for males in urban areas than for females while the reverse was true in rural areas. The distribution of the unemployed by age is also broadly similar for males and females with a higher proportion of unemployed aged 20–24 for both genders. These statistics are offset by a general decline in the population of working age (15 and above) employed in the formal sector. There have been sharper declines for men and a narrowing of the gender gap, but women's unemployment has been rising. It should be noted, however, that those outside the formal sector do not necessarily identify themselves as unemployed or underemployed in the same way as in those the formal sector.

Census and official unemployment statistics in Mongolia are based on GDP data which since 1993 has included production data for pay and profit as well as for private consumption. This is important for understanding gender gaps in employment since women's unpaid domestic labor for production for private consumption is now included in the system of national accounts (SNA). However, women's contributions to family care and to reproduction are not included and only become evident in time-use surveys. This distinction is important when calculating unemployment rates based on a proportion of economically active individuals. Many women report that they are fully occupied in domestic or reproductive work but fail to recognize how these activities contribute to production for private consumption and to the market. They are, therefore not counted in the economically active category. Women's reproductive activities cannot be readily separated from subsistence or other production, and this in turn leads to underestimating their economic contributions and hence their unemployment or underemployment in official statistics based on GDP.³¹ This blurring of distinctions between labor contributions is particularly important as the proportion of in-kind household expenditures increases and as household production is of growing importance as illustrated in Figure 9 on page 13.

²⁹ 2000 Population and Housing Census.

³⁰ The draft NSO Labor Force Survey 2003–2003 utilized criteria that included those persons who were in the labor force who did not work or had not had a job or business during the reference week, including those without a job or business who were not looking for work because they believed no work was available, were temporarily ill, waiting for a job interview etc.

³¹ There is a detailed discussion of the implications of these statistical distortions and their potential to influence policy in UNIFEM/UNDP. 2002.

The extent to which the skills of the labor force do not match the requirements of the workplace was measured in the Rural Sector Gender Responsive Survey (RSGRS) conducted by the UNIFEM and UNDP in 2002. Men and women employed in rural areas formed 65% of the sample.³² Except for age groups 25–29 for males and 50–54 for females, the majority of respondents reported that their jobs did not match their skills, primarily because appropriate work was unavailable. Sex discrimination was cited by only 1% of the sample.³³ The rate of mismatch is very high especially among the young who are leaving school without appropriate skills for the jobs available. This trend persists longer for females despite the fact that they remain in school longer and so should be relatively more highly skilled than young men. In fact, these trends have not been well analyzed. Gender differences point to the need for more research in order to understand how economic growth and employment policies can ensure appropriate training for labor markets so that both women and men can use their skills.

3. Discrimination in the Workplace

Wage gaps and under-representation of women in decision-making positions reflects gender discrimination in the workplace and in the job market although neither women nor men seem to recognize this as an issue. Ninety-five percent of 1,085 respondents considered that there was no discrimination according to an NSO survey in March 2002 funded by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).³⁴ The most commonly identified form of discrimination was for age, then for appearance, and then for gender with males citing more discrimination than women. These findings, however, were not consistent with those from another study involving 1,500 young people between the ages of 16 and 35; 49% were male and 51% were female.³⁵ One in ten identified that they had encountered some form of sex discrimination during recruitment. Again, more men than women were affected.

These findings indicate that sex discrimination is not identified as such. Job postings in the newspapers openly express a preference for male employees or a preferred age for candidates. In informal discussions, women and men noted that it is “normal” that senior positions are held by men and that if a man and woman with the same credentials interview for a job that the man should be hired. This is not perceived as discrimination. It is instead part of an overall assumption that households have a male head who is solely responsible for earning a livelihood despite extensive data³⁶ indicating that most households require two incomes to remain above the poverty line.

Employees and employers are both generally unaware of legislation that prohibits discrimination against women in employment, all of which has been revised in recent years but which is rarely, if ever, enforced. The following is a summary of recent labor legislation concerning workplace discrimination.

³² This survey was carried out in 2002 in three rural areas using a combination of participatory instruments with a survey population from a representative sample of 399 households.

³³ UNIFEM. 2002.

³⁴ Mongolian Statistical Association, 2004. Op. cit.

³⁵ Mongolian National University's Population Training and Research Center survey cited in Mongolian Statistical Association. 2004. Op. cit.

³⁶ For example the NSO Household Income and Expenditure Survey and NSO/World Bank PLSA.

- In the 1999 Labor Law, article 7.2 states that discrimination or conclusion of limitations or advantage based on nationality, race, sex, social origin and status, wealth, religion or ideology is not permitted. Article 7.5 states when recruiting an employee for work, an employer may not ask questions pertaining to private life, ideology, marital status, political party membership, religious beliefs, or pregnancy unless such questions are related to the work or duty performed.
- In the 2001 Law on Employment Promotion, article 4.2.1 prohibits discrimination by nationality, ethnic origin, language, race, age, sex, financial status, education, social origin, etc.
- In the 2002 Law on Government Service, article 16.1 prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex.
- In the 2003 amendments to the 1999 Labor Law, article 106.1 states that a mother with a child under 3 years of age shall be granted child-care leave if requested. Article 106.2 states that once child-care leave is over, employees must be permitted to resume their previous positions, and if the position has been eliminated, they must be assigned to another equivalent position. These articles also apply to single fathers with children under 3.

Some of the provisions of the 1999 Labor Law that result in discrimination against women were enacted ostensibly to protect women's reproductive rights but actually echo the pro-natal socialist period that perceived women primarily as bearers of children. One example is an amendment to the pension law in 1990 that allowed women with four or more children to be pensioned off which made them vulnerable to retrenchment during the economic transition. In 1994, 56% of all "retired" women of working age, about 20,000 aged 35–55, had been pensioned off because of the number of children they had.³⁷ This provision along with legislation for maternity leave and an earlier compulsory retirement age from government service (55 years compared to 65 for men) make employers reluctant to hire women especially during periods of high unemployment.

4. Foreign Direct Investment and Government Services

Foreign direct investment in the manufacturing sector frequently targets industries like ready-made garments that pay very low wages to female workers. This often leads to their exploitation with little contractual protection and hazardous working conditions. When unemployment rates are high, if workers leave because of poor conditions or are fired for trying to organize and press for improvements, they can be easily replaced. Furthermore, many investors seeking cheap labor are highly mobile and will quickly leave if labor is cheaper elsewhere. Many other developing countries have learned this at great cost to female workers' health and future employment potential. High unemployment prevails in Mongolia, and there has been foreign investment in factories in Ulaanbaatar that employ a high proportion of cheaper female labor. With its highly educated workforce, especially compared to competing countries in Asia, the government

³⁷ UNIFEM. 2001.

should encourage foreign investment from manufacturers that can take advantage of higher skills and should provide training or other incentives to attract manufacturers with less exploitive employment practices.

Employment services fall under the mandate of the Ministry of Social Services, Welfare and Labor (MSWL) and are designed to facilitate and support the development of an effective labor market. Current programs include (i) employment promotion through a network of local employment offices; (ii) appropriate employment opportunities for vulnerable groups; (iii) short-term skill training for unemployed and unskilled youth; (iv) enhancing skills of workers in the private sector as well as those in small businesses; (v) public works for unemployed people; and (vi) micro loans to create jobs.

Almost no data link employment generating programs with the actual number of jobs created, and none that are available are disaggregated by sex. Only small studies have been undertaken to date such as the recent one funded by UNDP as part of the gender budgeting program. Studies of larger samples will be important for understanding the impact and effectiveness of current employment programs and will assist in the development of future programs. Identifying targets for such programming is a highly complex process, and a solid understanding of the existing situation and of appropriate indicators will have to be developed for effective implementation as the labor market is constantly shifting in response to economic trends.

5. Recommendations for Integrating Gender into Employment Programs

- Define who the unemployed are (male or female), where they are located, and what incentives are required to draw them into more productive household activities or formal employment.
- Employment schemes and vocational and skill training programs should take women's multiple roles in sustaining household livelihoods into account. Women may choose activities that do not conflict with time required for domestic activities. Women without household responsibilities should be offered opportunities on an equitable basis with men especially for higher paid jobs in sectors such as transport or mining.
- Training programs and incentives to employers should encourage women to move into managerial or administrative positions in sectors identified for growth to utilize their higher levels of education. The skills of women in one sector could also be applied in others, e.g., health laboratory technicians could work in laboratories in the mining sector.
- In its employment centers, MSWL should encourage nontraditional employment through public awareness campaigns challenging gender stereotypes. The government should consider incentives to develop technologies to relieve the burden of women's domestic chores in order to free up more time for other activities. Time-use surveys will have to be carried out for all seasons as currently NSO data covers only 1 month. This is necessary to understand how productive SNA and non-SNA activities interact with domestic work. Government-sponsored

public awareness campaigns might also be appropriate to encourage sharing the burden of domestic work more evenly among other household members, particularly men.

- In sectors targeted for economic growth in which work is seasonal, unemployment insurance and similar provisions could provide steady incomes and ensure that workers are not penalized and discouraged from re-entering the workforce. The tourism industry is an example. It is highly seasonal and employs large numbers of women. Construction work (males) and agricultural processing (mixed) are also examples.
- Existing labor laws could be enforced to reduce discrimination against women. Under both the constitution and recent labor laws, women have equal access to employment; these rights should be protected by government action.
- Labor tribunals must be accessible to women and other victims of discrimination so they can seek redress. Awareness campaigns should educate employees and employers alike.
- Regulations enacted to protect women of childbearing age, such as maternity leave, should be assessed to determine whether or not they discourage the employment of women.
- Until government services are more available, women should have flexible contracts that provide for leaves of absence without loss of seniority to undertake domestic responsibilities like caring for sick children or the elderly.
- Public works employment opportunities should be designed to ensure women's equal participation, e.g., including activities requiring women's skills or offering nontraditional training to women that will build their self-reliance.

B. Women in the Informal Sector

The EGSPRS notes the importance of economic restructuring to create a stable and conducive environment for investment and growth especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). The informal sector has great potential to offer SME income-generating opportunities to the poor and to poor women in particular. Women moved into the informal sector to generate income as employment dropped and pensions and other social welfare entitlements could not cover family needs. Estimates of the proportion of women compared to men working in the informal sector are inconsistent partly because of difficulties in collecting accurate data but also because government definitions have yet to be established and therefore vary among surveys. Estimates of the proportion of women in the workforce range from 69% (United States Agency for International Development Economic Policy Support Program Survey in 1999) to 54% (2004 Human Development Report). Most recently, the 2002–2003 NSO Labor Force Survey found that women fill 45% of “occupations” in the informal sector,³⁸ but it counted only non-agricultural activities and was based on the size of the establishment, i.e., the number of enterprises with zero to four employees. There was no consideration made as to whether the enterprise was registered.

³⁸ Government of Mongolia, NSO, *Labor Force Survey with Child Activities Module for 2002-2003, Draft Survey Report of all four survey rounds conducted during October 2002–September 2003* dated April 2004, final report yet to be released.

1. Limits on Productivity

Several factors limit the potential for women to increase their productivity despite their rapid movement into the informal sector. Areas where women are concentrated such as small trading and food services offer few opportunities to increase profit margins without credit to invest to increase sales. The majority of fixed assets are registered to male household heads, so women have no collateral for borrowing. Furthermore, the skills involved in female informal sector employment like food preparation, hairdressing, or tailoring are accorded much lower value in the market place than those associated with male responsibilities.

The informal sector is perceived as offering more lucrative earning opportunities with less bureaucratic involvement, but many microenterprises are run without any knowledge of bookkeeping or marketing. Consequently, there are thousands of cases of entrepreneurs falling into bankruptcy including women with multiple family responsibilities and little hope of paying off debts. Educational levels are high in the informal sector in Mongolia, particularly those of women, which means the potential for learning these skills is high. Moncord is a women's microfinance cooperative that provides credit and other business services to over 600 members. Women apply the business training it offers very readily³⁹ and have adapted quickly to the need to find income-generating opportunities for themselves in the new market economy and to anticipate and manage risks. Men, on the other hand, have found the change to more self-reliance more difficult.

Men and women both face difficulties getting credit according to interviews with women entrepreneurs and executives in larger corporations. Women received 54% of small business loans in the first quarter of 2004 and 57% of loans in 2003 from the XAS⁴⁰ Bank which keeps a database disaggregated by sex. These recent data confirm the growing consensus that women are better entrepreneurs and credit risks than men outweighing the apparent disadvantage of lack of access to collateral to secure loans. However, other factors not associated with gender also limit access to credit. Banks in general have undeveloped credit appraisal systems and prefer not to provide services to micro or small enterprises with low returns in the high-risk business environment in Mongolia.⁴¹ There is also a general lack of business skills for tasks like preparing business plans to back up requests for financing.

Other factors beyond the business environment limit women's potential to expand their microenterprises. Lack of social services, particularly child care, was a significant factor identified in a recent survey of 600 Moncord members. Based on these findings, Moncord is planning to provide complementary nonfinancial services such as social counseling and peer mentoring to its members. It was also noted that the women who have had the greatest difficulty repaying loans were more challenged by social pressures such as abusive husbands or sick relatives than by business pressures. Women members willingly opt to pay Moncord's higher costs for the credit because of the non-business services available to them as members. Women have also

³⁹ Interview in January 2004.

⁴⁰ XAS is a Mongolian word signifying the ancient Mongolian and/or Buddhist symbol of union/unity. The official English spelling is a mix of Roman and Cyrillic.

⁴¹ ADB. 2004. *Private Sector Assessment* draft paper.

demonstrated they highly value services that facilitate their work or that develop their enterprises as members of community groups organized through nongovernment organizations (NGOs) or projects such as the ADB-supported Urban Housing Financing Project.

2. Small and Medium Enterprises

The movement of microenterprises into the formal sector as SMEs will be an important facet of economic growth, but the possibility of women benefiting from opportunities as entrepreneurs is limited. According to the Employers' Association Survey in 2002 of 482 SMEs (employing between 1 and 21 people), only one third of entrepreneurs are female.⁴² The actual rate of participation of women in such enterprises was 38%. There is a higher proportion of women in smaller companies (one to five persons), but the proportion shrinks as company size increases as confirmed in the latest NSO Labor Force Survey. More women could graduate from the informal sector and lead SMEs if they could get access to capital, skills, and social support.

There are also very few women's business associations that provide quality services for female entrepreneurs, and those that do exist are in the capital and have political affiliations that discourage many women from joining. Experience in other countries and to a limited extent in Mongolia has demonstrated that women prefer community and business groups that cater specifically to their needs as shared social concerns are more likely to be addressed and social support networks are more likely to improve. Mixed groups do not address such issues as the double work burden or property for collateral when household assets are held in the name of a spouse.

3. Recommendations for Integrating Gender into Informal Sector and SME Programs

- The contribution of women to informal economic production must be accurately tracked and then incorporated into policy and program analyses.
- Appropriate business training must be complemented by access to social programs to relieve women's double burdens. Mechanisms must be established to provide a broad range of services for female entrepreneurs that take into consideration their domestic responsibilities and their business needs. These services could be developed by women's business associations, by microfinance institutions, or by NGOs/community-based organizations.
- Vocational training and other programs should provide women with opportunities to move into nontraditional sectors like mechanics with greater potential for increasing returns on their labor.
- Business programs that combine access to a range of financial services (credit as well as savings programs) should be targeted to micro and small and medium enterprises headed by women.

⁴² Mongolian Statistical Association. 2004.

C. Land Reform and Privatization

The shift to a market economy has included private ownership of assets that formerly belonged to the state. In the first rounds of privatization, collective herds (*negdel*) were distributed to households, and state-owned enterprises and housing were sold. Two new rounds are currently under way involving land and electricity; aspects of health and education services are under consideration. Privatization will bring about changes in gender relations within households as ownership of what are effectively new assets is allocated to them. Because land ownership brings with it entitlements and access to other resources and opportunities, new property rights need to be mediated among household members through legal and administrative structures that proactively promote equity.

1. Property Rights

The EGSPRS places a high priority on making land more productive and assumes that private ownership will lead to increased investment and will establish its value in the market place. Owning property including land, buildings, and moveable assets brings many benefits. It can be a means of holding savings/wealth, a basis for earning income, or a means for undertaking other economic activities. New property rights therefore need to be legally and equitably allotted among household members.

Although the government acknowledges the need to ensure land registration has no negative effects on gender equality, there is growing concern among NGOs headed by women that this commitment will not be honored as policies and regulations are formulated and implemented. To date, for example, there have been no formal consultations with women's organizations on many basic issues. These include appropriate mechanisms for ensuring joint ownership for spouses, how to ensure that women are aware of their rights to joint ownership, and the legal reforms necessary for divorce and inheritance legislation to ensure women's access to land is recognized even in the absence of formal joint registration.

Private ownership requires a legal structure that establishes the rights of individuals and corporations to hold and transfer land for residential or commercial purposes. The legislation must also define how leasehold and other subsidiary tenures that involve continued state ownership of land or common holdings such as shared areas in apartment buildings will be recorded. It is a complex process that requires a clear description of existing land against which ownership and transfers can be registered. By 2002, the Law on Land, the Law on Allocation of Land to Mongolian Citizens for Ownership, and the Law on Land Fees had been enacted. ADB is currently supporting cadastral land surveying to establish a baseline land registry, but delays and confusion have occurred as new administrative structures are put in place. Nevertheless, land allocation and registration started in 2004 despite limited coordination with the cadastral project. As new laws and regulations are implemented, care must be taken that they conform to existing legislation on marital property and inheritance.

2. Registration and Titling

On initial analysis, new government regulations have not proactively supported gender equality in access to or control over newly allocated land. For example, they do not question the traditional definitions of “family” and “household.” Families are entitled to land if they officially registered as a married couple or as a household unit (i.e., one that contains more than one generation—an extended family) prior to May 21, 2003. Unmarried people who live outside a registered family are excluded, and based on official data this may include more than 250,000 young people, at least 50% of whom are female. When registering land, the names of all adult household members must appear on the title, but an individual can waive this right. There is concern, therefore, that land allotment may follow the trend of previous phases of privatization in which 46% of the properties (mostly rural livestock and urban housing) ended up in the hands of male household heads. Only 30% of titles were registered jointly to husbands and wives, and only 16% were registered to wives.⁴³ The government has not yet released data on land registered singly or jointly, regardless of sex, following implementation of the Law on Allocation of Land to Mongolian Citizens for Ownership. Therefore, monitoring trends in ownership is not possible.

Clearly stated joint ownership by married couples clarifies the right of both spouses to decide how land and other property will be managed and used. It also guards against the unilateral sale or pledging of property for credit, and it provides protection and security in the event of divorce or death of a spouse. Though joint ownership recognizes the interests of both spouses, it is particularly important for women as frequently their rights are not recognized. Women can use jointly owned land as collateral and can claim their portions in cases of marital dispute.

The technical and administrative aspects of land registration are extremely important as they may in effect determine who does or does not own property. For example, cadastral systems could establish mechanisms to resolve disputes that may not recognize that women have less bargaining power and community support than men. Women must have access to information on what land registration is and how it will affect their access to and control over land. Men must also recognize the importance of joint ownership to all members of the family.

3. Recommendations for Integrating Gender into Land Ownership Programs

- Disaggregate land data by sex and establish gender-responsive indicators to track how land allocation legislation is implemented in practice through interpretation of regulations by government officials and citizens during the registration phase. This will also be important for resolving disputes and for transferring land after death. The government has a clear mandate to ensure that women’s rights to land and other assets are protected and that any adverse impacts of new legislation are tracked and addressed as they occur.

⁴³ UNIFEM/UNDP. RSGRS. 2002.

- Develop administrative systems that are transparent and accountable, e.g., land registration forms that clearly state why joint ownership is important and explain the costs of signing away rights.
- Account for other legal regimes that govern access to property such as divorce or inheritance legislation when implementing and enforcing land laws. This is important if new processes are to function effectively.
- Link socioeconomic studies to new legislation and regulations on land reform and cadastral systems to ensure that legislation is equitable.
- Consult women's organizations as regulations are implemented.
- Identify specific monitoring indicators so the EGSPRS can track commitments.

D. Social Protection

While economic growth is central to reducing poverty, social protection policies and programs can also help the vulnerable. These include promoting efficient labor markets, diminishing exposure to risks, and enhancing citizens' abilities to protect themselves against hazards and interruption/loss of income.⁴⁴ Programs can use both public and private agencies and are best sustained if they build on and strengthen existing social capital.

The abrupt end to comprehensive state social services in 1990 exposed Mongolians to risks they had assumed would never occur in their lifetimes. Social safety nets were eliminated for all but the most vulnerable, and even for them, welfare programs were cut to a bare minimum as government resources dwindled. Families and individuals had either to become more self-reliant or to use more traditional systems (*kurhileelel*) to find alternative sources of income to cover services such as child care that were previously provided by the government. The impacts of these cuts are reflected in the rapid deterioration in development indicators in the 1990s.

The government is now addressing key aspects of social protection in a more coordinated and cost-efficient manner. The comprehensive Social Security Sector Strategy Paper (SSSSP) was adopted in November 2003. There is concern, however, that approaches that seek to reduce dependence and create self-reliance among those most at risk are not given priority.

1. Social Welfare

Social welfare services benefit the most vulnerable and needy groups identified by the government: i) children who have lost one or both parents; ii) physically disabled persons; iii) elderly living alone; iv) FHH; v) households with more than four children, and hence a high dependency ratio; and vi) some of the unemployed.⁴⁵ These definitions do not, however, consider the different types of risks for each group. For example, the system does not identify those temporarily at risk and how best to strengthen coping strategies instead of fostering dependence. There is also little consideration given to pooling risks among extended families or communities by building self-help networks. Some microfinance institutions (for example Moncord) are

⁴⁴ Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor. 2003. *Social Security Sector Strategy Paper*.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

considering developing these kinds of networks for members. Current programs also tend to focus on how to respond to a crisis once it has occurred; means testing is then the most common way of identifying those qualifying for welfare. To become eligible, individuals or families may be required to draw on savings or to sell assets which erodes their self-reliance once the crisis has passed.

Planners also need to be sure that social security programs understand dynamics within the household. Women living in MHH, for example, may not have access to resources or may be required to provide extensive unpaid household labor that leaves them no opportunity to generate income themselves. Seasonal workers are also a potentially vulnerable group; many women are limited to this kind of work in both the formal and informal sectors.

Dependence on social safety nets is strong in Mongolia, and the government recognizes this must be changed. Women seem more likely to be self-reliant than men, but as there is no data on social welfare recipients disaggregated by sex, it is not yet possible to understand how the services are used or to identify the different needs of women and men in the risk categories. It is currently believed that about 10% of the population would be genuine social welfare clients rather than the 38% currently supported.⁴⁶ The government cannot cut off those most vulnerable, but it must start to develop a much clearer understanding of the risks its citizens face.

One program in the SSSSP with potential to provide more effective, broad-based support to women is the proposed soum social service centers. The centers offer opportunities for service managers to have closer contact with those at risk and to improve their understanding of how to develop and deliver a range of programs that will build self-reliance while meeting the needs of recipients. The centers should also offer access to social workers and other professionals at the community level because women with children face greater difficulties in traveling. Counseling should be readily available to all women to help alleviate the impact of social ills such as alcoholism and domestic violence. Such counseling could relieve the burden on women as they cope with the emotional, economic, and social impacts of the economic transition.

2. Social Insurance

Social insurance benefits, with the exception of the pension scheme, are financed through a pay-as-you-earn principle by contributions from employers and employees and are available only to persons who satisfy certain conditions such as age and years of insurable service. Eighty-seven percent of employees in the formal sector are covered by social insurance, but the percentage is much lower among herders and the self-employed.⁴⁷ Many of the contributions made in short-term formal employment are effectively lost when an employee becomes redundant and drops out of the scheme. New programs that allow irregular contributions and transfers from formal employment to self-employment need to be considered to adapt to labor market trends.

⁴⁶ ADB. 2002b.

⁴⁷ Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor. 2003. Op. cit.

Women's participation in the labor force is also often characterized by spells of inactivity, for example during pregnancy or child rearing, which means there will be breaks in their contributions to pension plans. Furthermore, though women live longer, their access to higher paying sectors of the economy is limited. They therefore earn less over their lifetimes relative to men and receive smaller pensions.

3. Recommendations for Integrating Gender into Social Protection Programs

- Develop programs that provide employment training, credit for starting small businesses, and opportunities to pool resources of groups of women to reduce dependence on welfare programs in the longer term. Women's needs must be understood for such programs to be effective.
- Strengthen the understanding and skills of social service center staff so they can effectively counsel clients on the range of services available to take advantage of programs that best suit their circumstances. The management of health insurance subsidies has not been encouraging; lessons should be learned from this experience. A more professional cadre of social workers specifically trained to address gender issues will also improve government responses to women's needs.
- Consider spreading payments or avoiding them altogether for services such as health or housing subsidies to avoid diversion of funds by inefficient government agencies. Vouchers or credits could be considered to encourage a system that supports client choice as to how a "free" service is used.
- Conduct a detailed gender analysis to ensure the work patterns and needs of women and men are fully reflected in new social insurance programs. Many of the new schemes are employment based; therefore, the differences between employed workers and those informally employed, self-employed, and unemployed have to be taken into account as the latter tend to be women.

E. Infrastructure

Infrastructure is vital to Mongolia's economic growth, and there is considerable investment in this sector. As a landlocked country with a small population, Mongolia depends on road links between communities and with its neighbors [Russia and the People Republic of China (PRC)] to provide access to markets and services. There is also significant potential for Mongolia to act as a corridor for trade between Russian and the PRC that would provide additional income and economic opportunities to those along the route.

1. Road Improvement Programs

Experience in other countries has demonstrated the importance of recognizing the gender dimensions of the negative and the positive changes that may take place in a community as roads are improved. Women may welcome easier access to health and other services but may also be more vulnerable to trafficking or may be drawn into income generating activities that present considerable health and other risks. Increased road traffic can, for example, raise the demand for

commercial sex workers. This often leads to coercion, violence, human trafficking, and infection from sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Community and economic development activities that often accompany road improvement programs should ensure that a gender analysis of the impacts of increased vehicular traffic, economic opportunities, and greater mobility are taken into account and that appropriate services are offered. The specific needs of women should also be reflected in the design of related services and in policies on pricing transportation.

2. Water and Sanitation

Women's needs and ways of using other services such as water or sanitation should be taken into consideration in their design, operation, and maintenance. Some projects have already demonstrated that women are keen to participate in user groups but rarely lead them. Women are the primary users of water for household consumption and are responsible for managing family sanitation standards, so they have a high stake in the success of improvement schemes and should be offered opportunities to participate fully in all phases of development. Experience throughout the world has demonstrated that the primary users of infrastructure will maintain it more effectively than those with marginal interest.

3. Recommendations for Integrating Gender into Infrastructure Programs

- Conduct a gender analysis as projects are designed that reflects the needs and priorities of both women and men.
- Encourage women to participate with men in user groups in the design, operation, and management of improved infrastructure.
- Recognize negative and positive impacts of new roads to reduce risks of human trafficking and HIV/AIDS.

F. Environment

The MDG report identifies five pressing environmental issues in Mongolia: land/pasture degradation, air pollution, energy efficiency, deforestation, and biodiversity. Access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation in urban and rural areas is also decreasing as environmental conditions deteriorate.

1. Rural Areas

In rural areas, as pastures are degraded and desertification spreads, all family members are affected, but women have the added burden of managing scarce resources. As conservation policies and programs are developed, their impact on women as managers of natural resources has to be considered, and women should participate fully in community decision making. Two thirds of rural dwellers also use water from unprotected wells, from rivers, or from rain or snow. These sources are drying up in areas of increased desertification. The problems with surface water are further exacerbated by inadequate storage of chemical fertilizers, by run off from livestock or mining sites, and by improper management of solid waste.

2. Urban Areas

In urban areas, hazardous environmental conditions have developed from inadequate waste management in ger areas that is exacerbated by air pollution. Newly arrived, poor migrants have to place ger in areas where only a quarter of the population living in poverty has access to piped water from central sources compared to half the population of nonpoor.⁴⁸ Climatic conditions make it imperative for households to burn whatever fuel they can find which, when added to vehicle pollution, can create heavy smog for extended periods in winter. Sickesses like asthma that are associated with pollutants put additional pressure on women's time as they care for family members or divert scarce resources to health care.

Growing numbers of projects are addressing these urban environmental problems. ADB's Urban Housing Project is working with community groups to develop improved water and sanitation in ger areas in selected aimag centers. Most members of community organizations in this project are women although few lead them. Communities also need to be encouraged to change habits of water use and waste management and to understand the impact of their actions on the environment. Similar activities in other countries have demonstrated that women can be key agents of change to improve environmental conditions in rural as well as urban areas. Appropriate technology adapted to the specific needs of Mongolian communities and households must also be developed. Technologies that relieve the drudgery women face in carrying out household responsibilities deserve particular attention.

3. Recommendations for Integrating Gender into Environmental Programs

- Ensure that the gender dimensions of environmental degradation are taken into account in policies and programming.
- Encourage women to participate in community decision making on environmental and natural resource management.
- Involve women in the design and delivery of campaigns and other activities to encourage behavior change in the use of natural resources and in managing the environment.
- Encourage investment in appropriate technology to conserve and manage natural resources more sustainably, particularly technology that alleviates the difficulties women have getting water and other resources vital to domestic as well as productive activities.

⁴⁸ Government of Mongolia. 2003. MDG Report.

Since the beginning of the economic transition in 1990, educational achievements have declined, there has been a sharp drop in all health indices, and women's participation in political and other forms of decision making has decreased. In addition it appears that there has been an increase in gender-based violence.

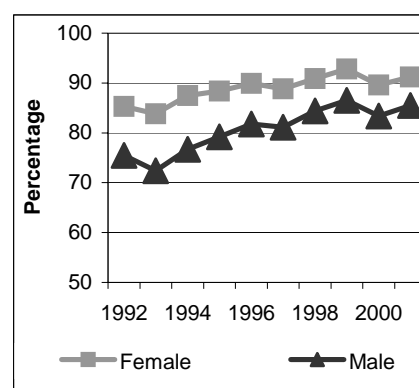
A. Education

High literacy levels and universal education up to eighth grade for boys and girls during the socialist era were a cornerstone for transforming Mongolia into a modern state. Even in remote areas, the state created infrastructure for all levels of education including boarding schools at aimag and soum for the children of nomadic herders.

In the early years of the economic transition, the education sector faced many setbacks, particularly inadequate allocations for heating and maintenance of facilities. Drop-out rates increased particularly for boys who were kept at home to help generate income. Overall enrollment of the age group 8–15 fell from 97% in 1990 to only 84% in 1995. Fees were also introduced to cover various costs, especially those of dormitories, just as real incomes were falling dramatically. Despite these problems, access to schools and pupil-teacher ratios have remained consistent across different regions. Expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP also increased from a low in 1995 of 5% to 9% in 2001.⁴⁹

Another cornerstone of the education system prior to 1990 was the extensive network of preschools and kindergartens. Between 1989 and 1998, however, the number of these institutions was cut in half as state funding was drastically reduced and they were no longer considered a priority. In 1990, 441 crèches accommodated 21,600 children; in 1998 the total had dropped to 34 crèches with an enrollment of only 1,600 children. The decline in preschool services is much steeper than the fall in the birth rate. Relying on mothers to provide early learning may affect overall educational achievements in the longer term in addition to making high demands on women's time.

Figure 16: Enrollment Rates at Primary Levels by Year and Sex



Source: Ministry of Education and Science data from UNIFEM 2002.

⁴⁹ UNIFEM/UNDP. 2002.

1. The Reverse Gender Gap

Girls enrolled in school outnumber boys in every aimag including the capital. This pattern emerged in the immediate post-transition period, and though the gap has narrowed in recent years, it persists nonetheless (see Figure 16).

The reverse gender gap is particularly noticeable at higher levels of education. Women constituted 80% of students who had completed secondary education in the UNIFEM RSGRS survey sample. The proportion of women who had completed secondary education was higher among rural populations than in aimag or soum in this same survey. According to Ministry of Education and Science data, 50% of primary and secondary students, 73% of tertiary diploma candidates, 63% of those seeking bachelor degrees, and 65% of master degree students are female.⁵⁰

Drop-out rates for boys at the secondary level are high among poor families in urban areas while in rural areas, children drop out even at the primary level. Forty-two percent of all rural dropouts were due to the need to work though parental complaints about poor teaching and deteriorating infrastructure were also given as reasons for withdrawing children from school. Drop-out rates were twice as high for boys from herder families because of the division of labor.⁵¹ While herder women and their daughters go to aimag and soum for employment and schooling, men and boys remain with the livestock. In addition, traditional attitudes on the need for education for girls who are not able to survive “by their wits alone” persist, so more family investment is made for girls’ education than for boys’.⁵² These drawbacks for boys are exacerbated by increases in

Table 2. Women’s Share of Enrollment in Tertiary Education by Subject in 1998

Subject	Total Enrollment	% of Women
Medical sciences	4,231	85
Public information	1,168	78
Humanities	6,619	78
Pedagogy / teaching	11,455	76
Production	7,398	74
Business and Management Sciences	11,952	69
Social sciences and Economy	5,482	66
Law	4,448	65
Agriculture	3,545	65
Natural sciences	2,345	58
Social and other services	2,751	56
Mathematics and computing	2,353	50
Arts	2,495	47
Architecture	189	34
Engineering	13,801	34
Others	4,988	40
Total tertiary	85,270	62

Source: UNIFEM 2001, *Women in Mongolia: Mapping Progress under Transition*.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ NSO and World Bank. 2001 PLSA.

⁵² Interviews in January 2004.

direct costs for education. In short, children, especially males, must now depend on their parents and families' circumstances for an education instead of on the state.

The impact of this reverse gender gap in educational achievement is already occurring as several female informants expressed concern over marriage possibilities as the gap widens for those currently in school. Women have not, however, been able to convert their higher levels of education into higher levels of income as persistent gaps in wages between women and men demonstrate. At the tertiary level, degrees pursued build on both traditional stereotypes of suitable jobs for women and men and on gender stereotypes that evolved from labor allocations in the socialist era (see Table 2).⁵³

Retraining and nonformal education tends to focus on new entrants into the workforce and not on those who need to improve their skills or learn new ones after retrenchment. Relevant vocational training is the mandate of the MSWL, but it clearly needs to be linked to educational reform. The SSSSP identified the need to revise MSWL employment services, but links to vocational training in schools are also required.

2. Employment in Education

The teaching staff at all levels of education is predominately female at 94% in primary, 71% in middle, and 68% in senior levels. Female teachers are 60% of the staff of vocational and technical schools and 52% of the staff of universities and colleges. This reflects traditional gender stereotypes of concentrating women at primary and middle levels where subjects are less technical. Data also show that the majority of school principals are male, while females manage school finances.⁵⁴ Some working in the education sector want to challenge these stereotypes by encouraging more men to work in primary and secondary education to provide alternative role models for young boys⁵⁵ and to encourage more women to take decision-making positions. Gender issues will also play a role if the morale of teachers and quality of skills are to be improved. Women currently have little time for extra training because of double work burdens.

3. Recommendations for Integrating Gender into Education Programs

- Fulfill commitments made in the EGSPRS to restoring quality kindergarten and early childhood programs.
- Incorporate learning materials that reinforce the right of all boys and girls to attend school so they can reach their full potentials.
- Give high priority to matching skills and educational achievements to employment opportunities, e.g., through improvements to the vocational curriculum. If education improves employment prospects particularly in the higher secondary grades and at the tertiary level, boys are more likely to remain in school.

⁵³ UNIFEM. 2001.

⁵⁴ UNIFEM/UNDP. 2002.

⁵⁵ Interviews in January 2004.

- Training offered in vocational programs should reflect the rapidly changing needs of the labor market and should challenge gender stereotypes to encourage more efficient use of labor and to reduce labor market distortions.
- Provide incentives such as conditional cash transfer programs to families of boys most likely to drop out of school. Lessons that may be appropriate for Mongolia can be learned from other countries where incentives have been used to keep girls in school.
- Broaden educational services to meet the needs of remote communities and adult learners whose skills no longer meet new economic realities. Some of these needs can be met through nonformal and distance education schemes that have been tested in Mongolia. Distance education is particularly useful for women as it facilitates balancing study and domestic responsibilities.
- Build a greater gender balance in teaching staff and administration.

B. Health

Descriptions of household well being in the PLSA include “healthy bodies, no sickness in the family, ability to access health care.”⁵⁶ The PLSA also noted that good health was mentioned by nearly all the groups as an important variable in determining a household’s level of well being. Prolonged sickness and the resultant costs (treatment, care and the inability to work) often lead to lower household living standards, especially among the poorer categories.⁵⁷ Health is generally better in Mongolia than in other countries with similar income levels and economic indicators; however, there are some worrying trends associated with women’s time poverty and their increasing responsibility as care givers.

1. Life Expectancy

Nationally, average life expectancy has almost regained the level prior to the economic transition, i.e., 63.7 years. It reached a low point of 62.8 in 1992, rose to 63.5 in 2000, and in 2002 was 63.3—60.8 for males and 66.47 for females (as expected based on biological tendencies). The data for 2002 show a slight regression since 1997 from a high point of 67.7 for women and 61.1 for men.⁵⁸

There has been a significant decline in infant and child mortality since the sharp increases of the early 1990s, and the current trends are on track to achieve the MDG. This is due to a combination of a fall in fertility rates, improved care for infants, and an immunization program among other factors. Persistently higher levels of child mortality are linked to lower education levels, poor general and reproductive health, low levels of nutrition, poor housing, and no access to good water/sanitation. Only 51% of the population has access to safe water and sanitation which increases health risks and affects health outcomes for children in particular. These factors in turn are associated with poor FHH and rural-urban differences in access to quality health services.

⁵⁶ NSO and World Bank. 2001 PLSA

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ministry of Health and UNFPA, 2000.

In these same poor families, women have more pressure on their time and resources and less knowledge of caring for children and infants. In such households, time to attend clinics or to participate in nutrition programs is very limited which must be acknowledged in programming. Women also note they have less command over the household resources they need to meet the priority they place on nurturing the family.⁵⁹

The rate of maternal mortality in Mongolia was 158 per 100,000 live births in 2000. Trends between 1992 and 2000 show a reduction of around 20% starting in 1999,⁶⁰ but it will not be sufficient to meet the MDG by 2015. Other health indicators such as child mortality have improved at a faster rate. Factors in maternal mortality are (i) location as it can limit access to services, particularly emergency services; (ii) birth order; (iii) low educational levels (involved in 50% of deaths); (iv) unemployment (25% of deaths,);⁶¹ and (v) large family size and inadequate resources to cover the cost of health services. Even though a high proportion of births are attended and take place at health care centers, the 2003 MDG report found that the poor quality of prenatal and postpartum medical services and the costs for services led to higher MMRs. The closure of maternity rest homes during the early 1990's also affected women's access to care for postpartum complications, but these services now being restored.

Women's overall health and MMRs are also influenced by the high rates of iron deficiency anemia. One study found that pregnant women received only 40% of the recommended daily intake of iron.⁶² This high level of iron deficiency anemia also correlates to the 23% of male and 18% of female babies of low birth weight (less than 2.5 kg). As noted in the Human Development Report, some analysts feel that rising unemployment and the associated fall in real income are beginning to threaten the nutritional security of children and pregnant women. This could undermine the progress made in recent years to regain the rate of 3% of children under 5 years who are underweight.⁶³

Mongolian men have a high incidence of stroke and heart disease when compared to men in similar countries, but this is associated more with their lifestyles than with poverty. In recent World Health Organization global rankings of smoking rates, Mongolia had the highest for males at 68% (25% for females). Alcohol abuse may also play a role.

The abortion rate was 231 per 1000 live births in 2000; poor women cited a lack of economic resources as the most common reason. Thirteen percent of maternal deaths were caused by unsafe abortions.⁶⁴ Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) also increased between 1991 and 2002. The incidence of syphilis rose from 3.7 to 6.7 per 10,000 population, and that of gonorrhea

⁵⁹ NSO and World Bank. 2001. Op. cit.

⁶⁰ Government of Mongolia and UNDP, 2003 *Draft MDG Report* Note that the significance of these changes should be considered in light of the low number of births per year in Mongolia (averaging approximately 36,000 per year) and maternal deaths therefore are averaging 58 per year).

⁶¹ ADB. 2002 b.

⁶² Ministry of Health and UNFPA. 2000.

⁶³ Government of Mongolia and UNDP. 2004. Op. cit.

⁶⁴ Government of Mongolia and UNDP. 2003. Op. cit.

grew from 9.4 to 19.6 per 10,000. Particularly for women, this increases the risk of recurrent infection.

These trends in STI statistics are also of concern should HIV/AIDS infection rates increase. Mongolia's young population which has yet to become sexually active, the growing numbers and younger ages of commercial sex workers, and evidence of intravenous drug use are all high risk factors for HIV/AIDS that are further compounded by migrant travel to and from PRC, Kazakhstan, and Russia all of which have a high incidence of HIV infection.⁶⁵ Women are especially vulnerable as commercial sex workers are predominantly women, and wives of migrants are often unaware of the high-risk behavior of their partners when they are away from home.

2. Improving the Quality of and Access to Health Care Services

Health infrastructure was put in place during the socialist period but requires modernizing. The quality of care from trained professionals is not high, and the supply of drugs and other technology is not consistent and is particularly inaccessible to rural populations. Problems persist in the quality of medical education, medicines, the health administration system, and responsiveness to user needs. In short, there is considerable public dissatisfaction with the quality of health services.

In 1990, legislation made primary health care available without discrimination and further stipulated that some services should be provided free of charge. Care was provided by *feldsher* (trained health attendants) working in health posts in villages (*baghs*) and by family doctors in aimag centers, but a network of hospitals was also established at soums in rural areas that included maternity rest homes and gynecology and STI clinics for women. (The number of rest homes has since been reduced, and among those remaining, 72% are reported to have inadequate buildings.)⁶⁶ Each soum has at least one doctor and one midwife, and access to them is based on a referral system.

Despite the focus on primary health, the hospital system has emphasized the curative approach channeling the majority of resources to inpatient services. In 2002, there were 754 hospitals with 18,616 beds and 6,823 physicians, i.e., one physician per 360 persons. This is a reasonable average, but there are large variations between regions, e.g. 209 persons per physician in Ulaanbaatar, but 314 in Orkhon and over 700 in more remote aimag.⁶⁷ ADB-supported projects have focused on strengthening primary health care through the family group practice scheme that in its second phase is expanding to soums with a good potential to meet the needs of poor households. This project addresses the concern that the hospital-oriented system is not moving from a curative to a preventive approach. The shift is still to be fully realized as statistics still demonstrate that insurance funds tend to go to more expensive hospital care though there are new policies to change that.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Government of Mongolia and UNDP. 2004. Op. cit.

⁶⁶ UNIFEM. 2001. Op. cit.

⁶⁷ Government of Mongolia and UNDP. 2004. Op. cit.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

The primary health care approach is reconfirmed in the Health Sector Medium-Term Strategy 2001–2004, especially in terms of providing access for those most vulnerable. It sets out mechanisms for targeting services including tracking the poor who use them. According to ADB's project preparation work for the second health sector reform loan, however, data on who is poor are not well managed which means that family group practices do not have relevant information on their target households. Furthermore, health profiles for women and men from the poorer strata of society are different in different areas specifically diarrheal diseases (linked to water and sanitation); STIs (linked to behavior); malnutrition and mother and child mortality indices (related to living standards and customs); and selected infectious diseases such as TB (linked to family living conditions). This information is not collected in a manner that adequately demonstrates where and how preventive services could be effective.

To rationalize the financing of health care, a health insurance fund was established that requires all employed and self-employed people to subscribe. Premiums are set by the government each year and should not exceed 6% of the contributor's salary (paid 50–50 by employer and employee). Users still have to pay 10% of treatment costs up to a predetermined limit; if the costs exceed the limit, the users must cover them. Some costs, for example for orthopedic devices, are not covered, nor is the full cost of drugs. In 2000, health financing comprised 66% from the general budget, 30% from the insurance fund, and 4% from user charges and other sources.

Health expenditures rose from a low of 3.1% of GDP in 1995 to 4.7% in 2002, but this proportion still compares poorly with the 5.5% expended in 1990. In 2001, health accounted for 12.0% of total budget expenditures and was financed from a combination of the state budget, the health insurance fund, and payments for services.⁶⁹ Private facilities have been permitted since 1991. By 1998, there were 828 private enterprises mostly concentrated in the capital that included doctors' practices, dental practices, small private hospitals and clinics (providing STI services and conducting abortions), and pharmaceutical production and sales. The EGSPRS states that incentives to increase private service delivery will be put in place to reduce the pressure on publicly funded services.

Table 3. Health Service Utilization /1000 Population by Household Consumption

Very poor	Poor	Non poor low income	Non poor middle income	Non poor upper income
67.3	97.1	109.1	131.4	179.5

Source: 2002 Second Health Sector Development Project Mongolia Social Impact Assessment Report.

The government pays the health insurance premiums of some categories of the population identified as vulnerable, poor, or disabled. In 2002, this amounted to 67% of all insured citizens.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Government of Mongolia and UNDP. 2004. Op. cit.

⁷⁰ ADB. 2002 b.

The cost of some services is waived for public health reasons if a person is not insured, e.g., for TB treatment or pre- and postnatal care. Despite their higher incidence of illness, the poor and very poor spend just over 2% of their incomes on health compared to 1.5% for nonpoor households at 20 and 160 MNT respectively.⁷¹

The time, transaction, and financial costs required to use the health system are significant particularly in rural areas and especially for women who are usually responsible for taking children to medical centers. The 10% user fees have been identified as a significant burden for poor households in several surveys. Utilization of both inpatient and outpatient services decreases as living standards fall reportedly because of costs and distance to centers.⁷²

According to recent studies for the EGSPRS, problems with insurance are the key reasons for failing to use health services (e.g. not covered, no card, lost card, disputed exemption status). The other main reasons are high copayments and “informal payments” demanded by the health workers. There are also many complaints that health officials are not familiar with the various subsidies available, with who is eligible for them, and with how they should be administered. Those most in need of the subsidies are intimidated by these complexities and the additional “fees” required for officials to consider their claims. It is clear that despite the health insurance fund and other schemes designed to ensure that the poor have equitable access to services, it is not occurring in practice.

3. Recommendations for Integrating Gender into Health Programs

- Develop a better understanding of the broad range of factors that influence the health of both men and women. The findings from these studies can also be used to strengthen preventive programs and can lead to a better balance between curative and preventive approaches to health care. Growing concerns about health risks for men also have to be taken into account when developing public health and preventive services. This also requires a more holistic approach to understanding gender differences in health risks and outcomes.
- Include campaigns to improve gender relations and to share household work particularly in rural areas in programs for at-risk pregnant women.
- Educate commercial sex workers and their partners on health risks and STIs. Government and NGOs working in this sector could apply lessons from other countries to address the significant risks presented to the whole population by the expansion of the commercial sex industry.
- Develop programs specifically for wives of high-risk males such as military or migrant workers. A great deal of attention is focused on behavior change for high-risk males, but their spouses and other regular partners also need to be targeted as reproductive health strategies are developed.

⁷¹ UNDP/NSO. 1999. Cited in UNIFEM 2001.

⁷² ADB. 2002b.

- Understand all aspects of the gender dimensions of reproductive health including the specific concerns of adolescents. This can be achieved through research and capacity building among health professionals, educators, and community workers. Include special sessions in all training programs for health professionals to help them identify the physical effects of domestic violence and to address the emotional effects on the mental health of victims. Health professionals may also be called upon to provide evidence in court as new laws are enforced and should work more closely with advocates seeking to reduce domestic violence by tracking and providing data on its short-term and long-range effects on victims and families. Similar skills are also required for working with victims of other forms of sexual abuse. Train health managers to ensure health insurance subsidies go to those most in need, to select programs that best fit individual cases, and to process claims.
- Manage and analyze gender-specific health data on the full range of risks such as living conditions, gender relations within the family, poverty, and other issues.

C. Violence and Harassment

1. Domestic Violence

Violence against women⁷³ is a significant health risk that is not covered specifically by an MDG or as a health policy priority of the government. The health costs of domestic violence go beyond the physical damage caused to women and children who are predominantly the victims.⁷⁴ Emotional trauma from family violence has long-term effects on the health of both adults and children. Studies have estimated the cost to economic production from domestic violence as high in terms of lost workdays, resources drawn from the health care system, and lost educational opportunities for traumatized children. While reducing persistently high MMRs is a priority of the MDGs, given the fall in Mongolian birth rates, domestic violence may have a greater overall impact on women's health.

Domestic violence has recently become a topic of public discussion in Mongolia because of the rise in alcohol abuse and the desperation of families during the economic transition, the intense lobbying of leading women's groups to adopt a domestic violence law, and the increased reporting of cases. One in three Mongolian women is subject to some kind of violence or pressure, an estimated one in ten women and every second child are involved in some kind of violence, and 95% of violators are male.⁷⁵ Domestic violence tends to be thought of as physical, not psychological abuse; sexual abuse within families, including incest, is not well understood.

The police, courts, and hospitals lack standardized reporting systems for recording domestic violence and do not allow public access to records. Furthermore, as is true elsewhere,

⁷³ Gender-based violence includes all forms (physical, psychological, and physical mutilation) perpetrated against girls and women and is assumed to serve by intention or effect to perpetuate male power and control.

⁷⁴ Survey on Violence Against Women and Children, National Center for Violence Against Women and the Center for Child Rights, 1999; UNICEF 2000, in Finch, 2002; Violence Against Women and Legal Framework in Mongolia, Center for Human Rights and Development et al. UNIFEM. 2002.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

victims are often reluctant to report it. In rural areas, for example, women are more exposed than men to family violence (73% of respondents agreed with this statement), but only 6% of men and 15% of women reported incidents according to the UNIFEM 2002 RSGRS survey. This reluctance is exacerbated by (i) the lack of state policy and institutions to provide shelter for victims; (ii) the lack of a strong legal framework for prosecution; (iii) the length of time required to process cases (during which the victim must often continue to live with the perpetrator); (iv) lenient sentencing of offenders; and (v) the tendency for victims to withdraw claims. According to a 2001 study carried out jointly by the National Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Watch Network Center, the National Center Against Violence (NCAV), UNIFEM, and Gender for Human Rights and Development, only 1,146 cases of assault were reported between 1998 and 2000 with 42% occurring in rural areas.⁷⁶ Health professionals are also important partners in addressing domestic violence, but more training is required to identify cases and to provide appropriate physical and psychological care. More follow-up services that offer protection and economic support to women and their children to ensure they are not forced to return to abusive situations will also be required.

Alcohol is most frequently cited as both causing and exacerbating domestic violence. It is readily accessible; in fact, 51% of the adult population regularly abuses it though only 6% of abusers are women according to a review of studies up to 1998 conducted by UNDP. Although the data in the UNDP report on the numbers of abusers are inconsistent, it is reported that the police “sobered up” 92,312 people in 1997 which corroborates the high numbers. An NCAV study cited in the UNDP report also found that 87% of people questioned said that family disputes most frequently occurred when alcohol was consumed.

The government has acknowledged the need to address alcohol abuse and has passed a series of laws to regulate consumption. The two-year Working Group for the Coordination of the Fight against Alcoholism established in 1997 brought together a range of stakeholders. Recommendations called for the creation of a national program that would include treatment for alcohol abuse and increased public awareness of its impact on family and community life. However, commitments to fight abuse have failed to clearly establish links to domestic violence; rather, the focus is on the public sphere, i.e., the work place, criminal activity, and to a lesser extent the impact on children and on family life.

The causes for the rise in domestic violence are more complex than alcohol abuse alone as identified in other studies carried out by the National CEDAW Watch Network Center and NCAV. Another recent study (2002)⁷⁷ shows unemployment and low levels of education also correlate highly with domestic violence. Unemployment, rapid social change, and other factors all serve to intensify existing imbalances in power between men and women. During debates in parliament on the draft law on domestic violence, for example, many male parliamentarians argued that the family and relationships within the family do not fall within the mandate of legislation, and that the draft law relied upon examples from other countries and failed to take into account Mongolian

⁷⁶ UNIFEM. 2002.

⁷⁷ Undarya. *Analytic Report on Domestic Violence in Mongolia*. Soros Foundation. July 2002. Cited in Finch. 2002.

traditions. These arguments ignore both women's basic rights to live without fear of violence and the criminal nature of physical abuse of any kind.

After several years of lobbying, the Domestic Violence Bill was passed on May 3, 2004. It articulates important principles including security for victims in government shelters, programs for prevention, behavior change for offenders, and strengthening stable family relationships. The government's responsibility to provide funding for these activities is also stated in the law.

Some weaknesses in the new law have been identified. There are concerns that it does not clearly ensure the safety of victims and the accountability of offenders.⁷⁸ It also proposes that police and social workers can apply for protection orders for victims independent of their wishes or requests and without the involvement of advocates who might have long experience in working in the interests of victims at a time of great stress. There is also concern from women's organizations that adequate funding is simply not available given current budget constraints in all government departments. Only time will tell whether sufficient political will exists to commit the necessary funding. Despite these challenges, the passage of the bill provided an opportunity for public debate. The fact that reporting of incidents has increased also indicates that more women are willing to risk public humiliation and possible additional abuse from the legal system to seek protection and redress.

The struggle to adopt the new domestic violence legislation is only the start of a process to ensure it is implemented as intended. Experience in other countries with similar laws has shown that gender stereotypes continue to be applied by the police, medical officers collecting evidence, lawyers, and judges. Attitudes about how men behave towards their wives in the household change slowly, even in societies where the rule of law has protected women for many years. Training the judiciary and all branches of law enforcement would contribute considerably to ensuring that women's rights, as well as those of men, are protected as intended by the constitution.

Recent studies have also highlighted the effects of domestic violence beyond immediate injury. A total of 30% of respondents noted decreased interest in work; 23% and 20% noted negative effects on their self-confidence and social status respectively; 17% said they participated less in public activities, and 10% mentioned loss of patience affecting their ability to properly care for their children. However, nearly half the victims neither reported their cases nor took any other action.⁷⁹

The courage of women who are willing to press charges against their abusers needs to be matched with appropriate support and services. The lack of shelters, counselors, and skilled medical professionals needs to be urgently addressed. The limited funding that has been available to some women's organizations from the Soros Foundation will not necessarily continue, and few other foreign agencies are stepping forward despite the repeated recognition in many studies of the

⁷⁸ Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights is a human rights NGOs in the United States with special consultative status with the United Nations that provided analysis of the new legislation to the UNIFEM Mongolia office and published it on their web site: <http://www.stopvaw.org/14Jul2004.html>.

⁷⁹ UNIFEM. 2001.

cost to communities and families of alcohol abuse and violence. UNIFEM has a new proposal for a program but has yet to secure funding.

2. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment in the workplace and in public places further restricts women's economic rights and opportunities. Harassment in all its forms including teasing, inappropriate touching, and in some cases explicit sexual abuse is prevalent but is rarely discussed publicly in Mongolia. The very limited recognition of sex discrimination in the labor market demonstrates how women and men fail to recognize what constitutes infringement of women's rights, what is appropriate behavior, and hence, when sexual harassment has occurred. Any actions that harass working women or cause them fear constitute an infringement of both the constitution and of specific criminal and labor laws.

The rule of law based on constitutionally guaranteed rights is an unfamiliar legal environment for Mongolians. Fully exercising women's rights guaranteed by the constitution requires challenging traditional attitudes. Women's own sense of self-worth is frequently under-mined through actual or threatened violence or harassment, and by persistent public attitudes of men that devalue women's multiple burdens and traditional responsibilities, all of which contribute to women's inability and/or reluctance to affirm and to claim their rights.⁸⁰

Box 1: Suggestions for Reducing Sex Discrimination in the Labor Market

- Train women to move into employment sectors identified for growth that are now dominated by men.
- Provide incentives to employers to tap women's higher levels of education by making them managers or administrators.
- Challenge employment stereotypes in public awareness campaigns.
- Balance incomes in seasonal occupations like tourism where most women are employed through unemployment insurance and opportunities for self-employment.
- Enforce existing labor laws. Women have the right to equal access to employment.
- Make labor tribunals accessible to women and others who suffer discrimination. Educate employers and employees on how the tribunals function.
- Adopt a sexual harassment policy that includes guidelines setting out definitions of harassment and procedures for complaints and disciplinary action, and communicate it to all employees—both male and female.

The scarcity of jobs creates an overall environment conducive to harassment because it discourages women from reporting it or actively struggling against it. Statistics on the incidence of sexual harassment are not available as no studies have been done, and women are reluctant to complain as they assume these are conditions they must tolerate. Women risk not only the loss of their jobs, but with current attitudes they also face potential problems in their marriages or families as they may be accused of provoking harassment. Only women suffer these consequences. This situation is exacerbated by a lack of counseling services.

⁸⁰ Identified in focus group discussions held in preparation of UNIFEM 2001 report.

The government can play an important role in eliminating harassment in the work place by enacting more effective regulations in the civil service, by creating model tribunal systems that other employers can follow, and by publicizing cases and how to address them. Sexual harassment feeds on gender stereotypes. The civil service should be the starting point for challenging stereotypes and for making the work place more accessible and the work experience more rewarding for women. This will, in the longer term, increase productivity, improve the quality of government services, and ensure women's rights are fully protected.

3. Trafficking and Illegal/Irregular Migration

The trafficking of women and children is a newly emerging form of gender violence in Mongolia,⁸¹ but very little is known or understood of its dynamics. The Asia Foundation recently funded a study by the Center for Human Rights and Development in which officers from the General Intelligence Office and the Criminal Police Department examined existing laws, policies, and programs and established baseline data on who is involved. The findings have yet to be released as verification is currently underway. Discussions with Asia Foundation officials, however, revealed that the initial analysis suggests that human trafficking is occurring. Several cases have been brought to court, and new legislation has been put in place to address this crime.

The current economic and social conditions in Mongolia facilitate human trafficking. Vulnerable groups such as street children, impoverished families unable to care for children, and adolescents economically forced to leave home are increasing. The temptation to travel with strangers, even without proper papers, on the promise of jobs in foreign countries can be too strong to resist.

Increased travel out of Mongolia to surrounding countries also exacerbates risks. Many migrants find themselves in places where there is high demand for commercial sex workers and may be coerced in locales where they have no social networks to turn to for help. The demand for forced labor in Mongolia is also increasing as certain industries illegally reduce the cost of labor or as criminal elements influence the job market by offering a supply of trafficked labor. Demand outside Mongolia is also increasing, and migrants are sought in newspaper advertisements that make promises that are so unrealistic that the real destination for those who apply must be questioned.

The rapid introduction of mass media has also encouraged young people to travel outside Mongolia without understanding the risks they might encounter and has had negative side effects for women. Prior to 1990 the state controlled all print and broadcast media, and they were heavily censored. Since 1990, over 600 newspapers have been established in Mongolia and more than 70% are privately owned. Three independent television stations have been launched though they are available only in Ulaanbaatar, and five independent radio stations now broadcast in the capital. It is vital to ensure that women have equal access to media. This requires equal access to employment, especially in decision-making and creative positions where programming is developed. There is

⁸¹ Violence Against Women and Legal Framework in Mongolia. Center for Human Rights and Development et al. UNIFEM 2002.

growing concern among women's organizations over the increasingly negative stereotypes of women portrayed in advertising and popular culture. Many private media outlets publish or broadcast what are considered by many to be humiliating pornographic images. There is also growing concern that the lack of controls over advertising is enabling unscrupulous employers to entice women unwittingly into exploitative situations, especially into the commercial sex industry.

The Mongolian government has few resources to protect migrants as they leave the country and little experience in this field compared with other Asian countries whose citizens work abroad. Under these circumstances, women and girls are particularly vulnerable as they are less likely to resist coercion than men, they fear humiliation upon their return if sexual abuse is involved, and they have limited options for alternative employment in destinations beyond prostitution or domestic work.

The demand for brides is also increasing. The imbalance in the sex ratio in the PRC is of sufficient concern to be raised by senior Chinese government officials at the 2004 People's Congress.⁸² There is already strong evidence of increased trafficking for marriage by organized criminals as well as by small operators from Viet Nam into southern PRC; the situation presents similar risks for Mongolian women.⁸³

Lessons learned from other countries can be applied in Mongolia, e.g., keeping better records of who leaves the country, providing pre-departure briefings, developing regulations for labor brokers and advertisements, training border guards to provide assistance and intercept those in trouble, providing services to migrants in destination countries, and providing counseling and health and economic services to returning migrants, especially those who are survivors of trafficking or other difficult circumstances. Prevention is also important at this point as traffickers are beginning to identify potential profits both inside and outside Mongolia. Neither the government nor civil society organizations currently have programs. Again, many lessons can be drawn from other countries. Public awareness campaigns can warn people how to identify false promises, especially from advertisements and strangers, and can raise the level of public debate on these issues stressing how migration can bring benefits while at the same time identifying what not to trust.

4. Recommendations for Programs to Combat Violence and Harassment

- Improve data collection and research to understand the causes and impacts of all kinds of gender violence. Initial studies are under way, but there are many gaps in the data and limited analysis as to how existing government policies and programs can be improved to address this critical concern.

⁸² Reported in the *Guardian Weekly Review*, March 11-17, 2004, Vol 170, No. 12.

⁸³ Recent news reports in the Mongolian press identified that a Korean man was deported for attempting to traffic 400 Mongolian women to Korea (as wives) and Japan (as erotic dancers). He had already sent 50 Mongolian women to Korea, and their whereabouts is unknown.

- Budget for the range of services required to respond to the needs of female victims of domestic violence and their children. Develop a network of shelters particularly outside the capital, create crisis centers at hospitals and police stations, and change public attitudes regarding the right for women to live without violence.
- Train all those responsible for enforcing the new Domestic Violence Bill to ensure that the spirit of the legislation is applied and enforced. Include special sessions in all training programs for health professionals to help them identify the physical effects of domestic violence and to address the emotional effects on the mental health of victims.
- Significantly increase the government's understanding of human trafficking in Mongolia. Put mechanisms in place to track migrants, follow up survivors of trafficking, and seek lessons from other countries. Enforcing the revised counter trafficking legislation should be informed by improved data and analysis in light of concerns that have emerged in other countries such as protecting the right of women to migrate safely and how to protect and rescue children.
- Target poverty reduction and social protection programs more effectively to those most vulnerable to trafficking. Improve the understanding of who is poor and what their specific needs might be and apply it vigorously to ensure that the most vulnerable can benefit and resist trafficking.
- Integrate trafficking prevention into existing infrastructure and community development programs. For example, consider in the design of infrastructure projects how opening up international borders will also influence the flow of migrants and other factors that intensify risks of trafficking.
- Learn from other Asian countries and draw on their experiences when developing programs. Preventing trafficking should not be considered a separate sector; rather, it should be mainstreamed.
- Monitor media consistently for negative images of women, quality of reporting on gender issues (e.g. domestic violence, sexual harassment), and other concerns.
- Develop material to lobby for a stronger regulatory environment for the media to address gender inequalities and negative portrayals of women.
- Develop positive programming that promotes gender equity (e.g. soap operas, current events discussions, new venues for music and theater); provides a voice to young women; and presents alternative images of women, (e.g. role models, nontraditional careers, exploring how to cope with harassment).

D. Democracy and Women's Participation in Decision Making

Despite recent economic shocks, there have been impressive democratic developments in Mongolia especially in comparison with other Central Asian republics. A constitution guaranteeing individual rights irrespective of gender was adopted in 1992, multiple political parties have emerged, and several elections have taken place changing governments without disruption. However, there is one facet of democracy that has been less successful and which is not so frequently acknowledged: the limited access for women to political and other decision-making positions.

1. National Representation

The representation of women in the national parliament has declined sharply and is well below the international 30% target set at the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women. Women were 23% of the total in 1990, 3% in 1992, and about 11% following the 1996 and 2000 elections. After the 2004 election, representation declined further to 7%. Table 4 shows that these low rates extend to all levels of political decision making. This is surprising considering the high participation rate of women in the workforce, but mirrors the fact that women rarely hold senior positions in either the public or private sectors.

Table 4. Proportion of Women in Political Decision-Making Positions

Position	1997		2001		2004	
	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women
President	1	0	1	0	1	0
Speaker of Parliament	1	0	1	0	1	0
Deputy Speaker	1	0	1	0	1	0
Prime Minister	1	0	1	0	1	0
Members of Parliament	76	8	76	9	76	5
Cabinet members	9	1	11	0	-	-
All level Governors (aimag, soum, city, district)	373	9	338	11	-	-
Ambassadors	28	0	30	1	-	-
Chairpersons of local <i>Hurals</i>	22	0	22	0	-	-

* Decisions regarding office holders and results from local levels of government are not yet available.

Sources: 1997 data Women's Information Referral Centre from UNIFEM 2001; and 2001 data from Survey. "Political Participation of Women," Gender Centre for Sustainable Development, 2002; published results from 2004 elections.

Female politicians identified several factors that increasingly limit their participation in elections.⁸⁴ The financial resources required to run a campaign have risen sharply at each election, and women find it harder than their male counterparts to raise the funds required. Nominating candidates within parties is also complex and favors males with existing networks. Senior party members also ran female candidates against each other which was arguably the main factor in reducing the number of women elected.

Political and economic participation means having an effective role in making decisions that influence an individual's life. The gender empowerment measure (GEM) uses variables explicitly constructed to measure the relative empowerment of women and men in politics and economics. Mongolia's GEM was 0.458 in 2002⁸⁵ which was lower than its GDI.⁸⁶ This gender gap

⁸⁴ Interviews former and current women parliamentarians following the 2004 election.

⁸⁵ Government of Mongolia and UNDP. 2004. *Human Development Report Mongolia 2003, Urban-Rural disparities in Mongolia*.

⁸⁶ South Africa, with similar GDI to Mongolia's, has 30% representation of women in Parliament and consequently a considerably better GEM.

means that decisions are made without the direct influence of half of the population which restricts democracy and infringes the rights of women guaranteed in the constitution. As noted by one female parliamentarian, gender issues are not considered to be important in political affairs, and even she herself rarely remembers to consider a gender perspective.⁸⁷ Political parties relegate women's issues to the social sphere, and it might be argued that the government's tendency to place gender equality in the context of the family only reinforces this.

2. Decentralization

Weaknesses in other areas of governance have an impact on women and gender relations. The executive branch of government has undergone radical reforms during the economic transition, but decision making remains highly centralized and there is a lack of transparency and accountability. Decentralization has been a priority of the governance reform agenda, but little actual decision-making power has devolved, and there is very limited consultation with those most in need of government programs. Centralized decision making, especially when there are so few women in senior positions in government, is neither consultative nor gender sensitive.

Most ministries have limited capacities to analyze the social policies or programs necessary to improve targeting benefits to the poor. If the government is to ensure that economic growth is really pro-poor, such targeting is vital and requires a good understanding through consultation and analysis of the different dimensions of poverty and how all citizens—male and female—experience it. Gender analysis and gender budgeting, among other methodologies, offer good tools to improve government programming and monitoring.

Centralized planning and decision making do not encourage women to take action as decisions on most issues seem remote and rarely reflect their daily concerns. Because they are not consulted about their needs and priorities, policies and programs at all levels will fail to fully address them. More opportunities will be available for women to participate in changing the institutions that affect their daily lives as decentralization progresses. Basic training on the functioning of these institutions will be required for both sexes if their participation is to be encouraged and effective. Consideration might also be given to quotas for women officials—elected or otherwise—at lower levels of decision making. Though quotas were in place for women during the socialist period, there was no training to ensure that women participated effectively. A combination of training programs and quotas for women has transformed women's potential to effectively influence decisions in several countries; the lessons can be applied in Mongolia.

3. Civil Society Institutions

Civil society institutions have also developed during this period of government reform and democratization. NGOs headed by women pioneered awareness raising on democratic values and practices. International NGOs have provided support to these organizations facilitating the emergence of several highly reputed women's NGOs that promote gender equality at various levels though few NGOs can implement development programs. Most are only active in Ulaanbaatar and

⁸⁷ Interview during January 2004.

do not work at the grassroots level. Community organization is not a tradition in Mongolia, and the harsh conditions during the economic transition have not allowed much time for women to organize for political action. Civil society has the potential to assist those without voices in decision making to participate more fully, but the necessary organizational skills are not well developed. There is also a lack of capacity among NGOs to carry out gender analyses or to promote gender equality in their work.

The legal system has also undergone fundamental changes during the economic transition. On paper, government reforms have made a great deal of legislation more rights based and have permitted the rule of law to operate. Implementing the huge body of legislation revised since the early 1990s has, however, been less impressive.⁸⁸ Many professionals are not yet familiar with the reformed legal system, and citizens are unaware of how their rights can be exercised through the courts. Women's rights are regularly undermined through illegal discrimination in the workplace, sexual harassment, or domestic violence. The limited capacity of law enforcement agencies to apply new legislation as intended makes it highly unlikely that women will use the courts for recourse or to protect their rights.

4. Recommendations to Increase Women's Political Participation

- Increase public awareness of the importance of women's participation in politics. Civil society in particular has an important role to play in increasing awareness in political parties and among voters.
- Increase women's awareness as voters of their role in making elected officials accountable regarding gender equality, women's empowerment, and ensuring their specific needs are addressed in policies and programs.
- Build the capacity of elected officials, particularly women, to address gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Strengthen the capacity of local government officials to consult with women and incorporate a gender perspective into the budgeting and planning at all levels of government to ensure that the needs of women as well as men are addressed.
- Build legal literacy among women to encourage them to use legislation to protect their rights and to advocate for legal reforms and more effective enforcement of existing legislation.
- Increase gender awareness among the judiciary, lawyers, and other officials involved in law enforcement to more effectively implement existing legislation to protect women's rights.
- Apply government commitments to improve the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming and the protection of women's rights through all existing and reformed legislation.
- Ensure the coherence of new legislation that affects women's rights, e.g., that property rights created in the Land Law are confirmed in marriage and inheritance legislation.

⁸⁸ ADB. 2003. *Governance: Progress and Challenges in Mongolia*. Draft

The government of Mongolia has recognized the importance of addressing poverty, gender equality, and emerging gender gaps, but the necessary analytical skills to do so were not well developed during the socialist period. The intensity of the initial economic transition led to a mix of welfare programs that were not well coordinated and did not alleviate poverty in the longer term. Recently, however, several steps have been taken to improve the understanding of poverty and gender among decision makers and to link this understanding to more appropriate and coordinated policies and programs. The comprehensive National Program for Gender Equality was adopted in 2003, and a commitment was made to mainstream gender into the overall work of the government and of civil society. The Economic Growth Support and Poverty Reduction Strategy, also adopted in 2003, is the first comprehensive framework to coordinate the government's poverty programs.

A. The Economic Growth Support and Poverty Reduction Strategy

The EGSPRS (prepared as the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper) was approved and adopted by the government in the summer of 2003. It builds on the national poverty alleviation programs implemented from 1994–1999 and draws together policy priorities of all relevant line ministries to set goals and objectives to guide economic growth and poverty reduction across all government functions. Consistent with the MDGs, it envisions reducing poverty rates by 25% for the “extreme poor” by 2005 and by 50% in 2015.

Box 2: The Economic Growth Support and Poverty Reduction Strategy in Brief

The overall goal is to accelerate economic growth to 5–6% per annum and to reduce poverty with efficient mechanisms to channel the benefits to the poor. Economic growth will be achieved by accelerating private sector growth; stabilizing the macro economy; reducing inflation; developing free market competition and appropriate monetary, credit, and tax policies; and raising living standards. Priorities for reducing poverty are increasing employment among the poor and nearly poor in aimag and herder families by economic restructuring and public sector reforms.

The economic growth strategy will focus on:

- mining, extraction, and processing domestic raw materials;
- tourism;
- information technology;
- infrastructure for small and medium enterprises.

Objectives / priorities in programming will focus on :

- promoting economic and financial sustainability;
- improving access to markets;
- ensuring sustainable human development.

1. Gender Analysis

The EGSPRS provides a strong analysis of different facets of poverty in Mongolia but focuses particularly on income poverty. Little specific attention is paid to gender gaps in the main analytical section, and the poor are generally considered as a homogenous group throughout the document. The separate section on gender equality draws from the NPGE and the National Council on Gender Equality (the National Council) which provided additional inputs during its preparation. Gender considerations in economic opportunities, access to public services, and vulnerability to poverty are highlighted in this section of the EGSPRS. It is unfortunate, however, that these same points are not raised again and are not integrated into the general analysis of these issues elsewhere in the document. For example, on the pages immediately following the gender equality section, social and physical insecurities are identified including domestic violence and marital breakdown, but there is no indication of their differing impacts on women and men and of their effects on poverty reduction efforts.

As development goals and policy priorities are identified, there is only occasional mention in the EGSPRS of the gender dimensions of the proposed areas for programming, e.g. the subsection on regional and rural development notes that the proposed intensification of livestock husbandry will require increased demands on women's unpaid labor. No alternatives are provided to mitigate these demands. Instead there is the statement that relevant agencies and civil society must coordinate. "...to ensure equal opportunities and benefits for men and women as well as reducing any possible social and economic risks."⁸⁹ This illustrates a general problem with the document: many goals are stated, short, medium, and long term, but there is little practical guidance on how these goals are to be translated into the designs and budgets for actual programs. A great deal of work remains to be done in this regard.

2. Public Sector Reforms

Significant public sector reforms are underway led by an ADB-supported loan. The objectives include rationalizing human resource allocations against needs and improving the quality of services by changing working conditions, building capacity, and developing careers. Creating a work environment free of discrimination is ultimately the responsibility of the government. Enacting more effective employment equity regulations as part of the current reforms, creating model tribunals for appeals against discrimination, and publicizing cases and how to address them are all measures that could be taken. The civil service should be the starting point for challenging gender stereotypes, for making the workplace more accessible, and for making work more rewarding for women. This will, in the longer term, increase productivity, improve the quality of government services, and ensure women's rights are fully protected.

3. Economic and Financial Sustainability

A main focus of all fiscal reform measures identified in the EGSPRS is to shift to performance-based budgeting that links policy priorities to allocations. A central step in this

⁸⁹ Government of Mongolia. EGSPRS. 2003.

approach is monitoring the impact of previous programs (and their budget allocations) to learn how and what initiatives can be adjusted or continued. The priority in Mongolia is reducing poverty, so ensuring that programs have indeed been pro-poor and can demonstrate progress on poverty reduction indicators is fundamental.

Gender is one of the key factors influencing who is poor and who can avoid falling into poverty. An important consideration in the effective management of government resources therefore is ensuring that gender variables are understood and that measures are taken to address and reduce distortions and discrimination. This requires a gender analysis of policy and program impacts that links budget allocations to program effectiveness. Gender budgeting, as promoted through the UNDP-funded program Capacity Building for Gender-sensitive Budgeting, provides skills and tools to carry out gender-sensitive analyses and to strengthen the mainstreaming of gender concerns into all policies and programs. Gender budgeting is also built on a performance-based approach.

In practice, performance-based budgeting relies on compliance with project budgets, tracking inputs and outputs, and achieving or delivering against specified goals. This is challenging for governments throughout the world. While it is relatively easy to track quantitative outputs linked to outcomes such as economic growth through GDP, it is much more challenging to identify social costs of different spending patterns, some of which might take several years to become evident. For example, cuts in primary school programs might in the longer term result in increased social ills as school leavers receive poorer education and may not be able to find work. This affects women and men differently within a household.

The causes and effects of social changes are difficult to establish, and wide-ranging impacts are difficult to predict. The economic transition has, however, demonstrated to many in the Mongolian government that social costs cannot be ignored as poverty remains despite signs of economic growth. This emphasizes the need for broad-based, gender-sensitive analyses of the impact of policies prior to budget allocation. The impact should be tracked over time and reconsidered when the next budget cycle begins.

4. Monitoring

The Ministry of Finance and Economy (MOFE) is responsible for tracking the implementation of the EGSPRS. UNDP supported the establishment and training of a poverty research group (PRG) of six specialists, including a gender expert, to develop a monitoring system. Representatives from monitoring and evaluation units in key line ministries formed a data user committee with five subcommittees to analyze progress in the various sections of the EGSPRS. It is the responsibility of each ministry to feed appropriate data to the PRG.

There is concern among PRG members and MOFE that it will be challenging to keep gender equality concerns “on the agenda” while more detailed indicators are developed.⁹⁰ While the PRG has agreed that data should be disaggregated by sex, that information is not available at

⁹⁰ From interviews in January 2004.

the moment. Data entry sheets currently specify name and age but not sex. It will not, therefore, be easy to follow up on this commitment. The gender expert in the PRG will have to take a very proactive approach and provide considerable technical assistance to achieve this goal. There is also concern that monitoring data are not communicated or used by budget makers, and as yet there is also no link between relevant NPGE indicators and the EGSPRS. This should be considered a high priority as sharing indicators could mean that data and analysis from the PRG could be used to track progress on implementing the NPGE.

5. Recommendations for Integrating Gender into the EGSPRS

- Formalize indicators for gender budgeting. National and provincial decision makers have been trained in the UNDP gender-budgeting project, and tools are being developed based on studies designed to understand gender gaps in budget allocation and other areas that might be of significance in employment and social service programming. These studies were expected to be completed by May 2004 and can be used to develop specific tools and additional capacity building materials.
- Mainstream technical capacity into current training in all areas through programs to reform and strengthen the civil service and government.
- Ensure civil service reforms promote employment equity and address sexual harassment.
- Build the gender capacity of data user committee and subcommittee members with learning objectives that include a basic understanding of the significance of gender disparities and the selection and tracking of gender-sensitive indicators.
- Establish links with experts in monitoring gender gaps, e.g. NGOs headed by females and NSO staff with gender expertise.
- Commit senior management to collecting and analyzing gender-sensitive data to gain support across all ministries.
- Develop draft indicators to track key gender disparities that can be used to advocate for further progress.
- Link EGSPRS indicators to those already identified for the NPGE to facilitate cross comparisons and efficiency in the collection and analysis of data. Table 5 identifies entry points for strengthening gender integration into EGSPRS programming.

Table 5: Entry Points for Strengthening Gender Integration in the EGSPRS

Policy	Entry Points
Increasing employment among the poor and nearly poor:	<p>Understanding gender-based distortions in the labor market through additional studies and gender analysis.</p> <p>Reducing discriminatory practices in the labor market by ensuring that existing legislation is enforced and accessible mechanisms are in place for redress.</p> <p>Raising public awareness regarding discrimination against women and sexual harassment in the workplace.</p> <p>Effective targeting of employment programs identifying who is unemployed and an understanding the gender dimensions of unemployment. Women have three ways of contributing or not contributing to the system of national accounts which influences unemployment rates because of who is considered economically active.</p> <p>Developing training and employment schemes that take into account the need for women to balance domestic responsibilities with productive activities in a manner appropriate for both women and men.</p> <p>Ensuring economic growth sectors provide opportunities to women even if this requires training in nontraditional skills.</p> <p>Establishing links between social service programming and employment trends to ensure that incentives remain for women to participate in the formal workforce, e.g., short-term use of unemployment insurance to cover periods requiring care of the sick.</p> <p>Increasing protection of labor standards in sectors of foreign direct investment where many employers perceive the female workforce as exploitable, cheap labor.</p>
Private sector development: Structural reform Informal sector and SMEs Access to markets	<p>Recognizing women's contribution to economic growth from all sectors, especially the informal and subsistence sectors.</p> <p>Increasing returns on women's labor in the informal sector through investments in new technologies.</p> <p>Targeting business development services to women, especially through groups / associations that can also incorporate other services.</p> <p>Ensuring women participate in appropriate training and increase their business skills (including knowledge of markets) in sectors where they are already active.</p> <p>Ensuring equitable access to land and other private resources through gender sensitive legislation and application of regulations, including the proportion of land division in joint ownership.</p>

Policy	Entry Points
Regional and rural development: Develop regional development plan Increase agricultural productivity Increase nonfarm employment Risk management and preparedness for natural disasters Improve rural infrastructure	Carrying out time use studies to increase understanding of the balance between different types of labor contributions from women and men within the household. Recognizing women's contribution to the rural economy. Offering appropriate employment opportunities for women in nonagriculture activities. Increasing the value-added aspect of women's labor contributions in processing through technological advances, training, etc. Ensuring participation of all community members in planning, implementing and maintaining environmental and natural resource management activities.
Economic and financial sustainability: Budget and finances Civil service reforms Local governance reforms	Ensuring gender-sensitive policy and program impact analysis at all levels. Ensuring gender-sensitive budgeting at all levels. Ensuring employment equity and sexual harassment considerations are part of reforms. Government has an opportunity to take leadership in this area as an employer that respects and protects women's rights. Ensuring women's participation in local government decision making. Increasing technical capacities to carry out gender analysis and gender-sensitive budgeting with increased resources. Developing guidelines and circulars for local governance reforms that incorporate gender dimensions.
Human development: Education Health Social services and welfare	Education Reinforcing and protecting the rights of boys and girls to education and women's rights in general through the education system and public awareness campaigns. Challenging gender stereotypes in the curriculum. Ensuring quality and accessibility of education for boys and girls. Proactively targeting programming to increase boys' enrollment and reduce drop-out rates. Incorporating gender dimensions of unemployment and the labor market into the development of vocational training programs. Incorporating gender dimensions into efforts to improve the working conditions of teachers.

Policy	Entry Points
	<p>Health</p> <p>Increasing understanding of the broad range of health risks of women through gender-sensitive studies and research.</p> <p>Increasing the availability and application of gender-sensitive data and information concerning primary health care to policy and program development to increase women's access to good quality, appropriate services.</p> <p>Targeting women at high risk for STIs (including HIV/AIDS) as well as their husbands</p> <p>Developing and delivering gender-sensitive training to medical professionals on domestic violence and sexual abuse.</p> <p>Social services</p> <p>Carrying out studies and analyses to improve understanding of the different coping strategies of women and men to ensure social service programming increases self-reliance.</p> <p>Increasing skills among social service professionals to address the specific needs of women, especially in areas such as social work and counseling.</p> <p>Ensuring employment officers receive gender-sensitive training.</p> <p>Ensuring employment schemes involving public works offer opportunities equitably to women.</p>

B. Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Empowerment

1. National Program for Gender Equality

The National Program on Advancement of Women 1996–2002 (NPAW) was put in place to follow up on commitments made in the Beijing Platform for Action of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women. Ten priority areas were identified that included not only policy goals but also actions. Progress on implementing this program was disappointing as the technical capacities within government agencies and the funds allocated were both very limited. In 1999, UNIFEM signed a memorandum of understanding with the Mongolian government to provide assistance to implement NPAW. A more detailed study of the status of women in Mongolia was published (*Women in Mongolia: Mapping Progress under Transition*) to provide a stronger analytical basis for implementing NPAW and for guiding policy making at all levels.

In 2001 the National Council for Gender Equality was established to create a forum for consensus building and consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including civil society and to provide leadership in implementing NPAW. In December 2002, the NPGE was approved by the cabinet and the Prime Minister as Resolution #274 which updated priorities from the Beijing Platform for Action and adopted a gender and development approach. The program goals are to be achieved by 2015 in line with the MDGs with five main objectives and indicators for tracking progress.

- *Gender equality in family welfare and development* focuses on the household and family unit and covers issues such as the legal framework for equity of ownership of property, encouraging equitable decision making, and combating domestic violence.
- *Gender equality in economic relations* covers all areas of economic policy promoting gender-sensitive budgeting and improving gender relations in the labor market.
- *Gender equality in rural development* focuses on support in areas such as education, employment, access to information, natural resource management and improved reproductive health services.
- *Gender equality in decision making* focuses on political, government, economic, and civil society organizations through improved legal frameworks, training, awareness raising, and public pressure.
- *Strengthened national mechanisms to promote gender equality* focuses on government and civil society.

These objectives were based on consultations with the government, NGOs, and other stakeholders. On December 23, 2003, a follow-up consultation was held to review recommendations for government approval for the structured implementation of the NPGE. These recommendations set out the respective roles and responsibilities of government and civil society stakeholders. MSWL is to coordinate implementation at the national level to ensure the consistency of policies and programs on poverty reduction and employment promotion. They will report on progress to the National Council twice a year. Other ministries are required to provide information to MSWL and to take specific responsibility for areas of the NPGE that fall within their respective

mandates. NGOs also have guidelines for implementing the NPGE. Donor organizations that can potentially collaborate are identified and are encouraged to form a steering committee to coordinate their contributions to gender mainstreaming. A framework for implementing programs in the provinces and capital city is also included along with a monitoring and evaluation framework and general statements about funding for the NPGE.

The NPGE is a very comprehensive document that covers all aspects of the development agenda in Mongolia. The recommendations for its implementation presented in December 2003 provide the means for major stakeholders to identify their roles and responsibilities, but the steps from making broad commitments to actually securing funds, technical resources, and implementing specific activities remain unclear. Little progress has been made since. The 2004 elections interrupted the momentum as uncertainty grew about the future of the National Council under a new government.

A major constraint to implementing the NPGE is that neither the National Council nor, perhaps even more importantly, MSWL have the funds or technical capacity to do so. A full-time consultant to the National Council was funded by UNIFEM but was often used by the cabinet secretary for other responsibilities. There is also one staff member responsible for gender equality in the population and social protection department of MSWL, but again, this is not a dedicated, full-time responsibility. The consultant's contract ended in mid-2004, and at the end of the year the new government had yet to provide a clear indication of how it would revive the implementation of the NPGE. Suggestions have been made that leadership of the National Council should be placed in the Deputy Prime Minister's Office to increase momentum.

The main focus of the NPGE is on strengthening the family unit by improving gender equality. This is also how other ministries understand the NPGE. If the family unit is strengthened, incomes will increase and the social ills of poverty, such as domestic violence, can be addressed. Members of the Parliamentary Social Policy Standing Committee and the Women's Parliamentary Caucus reinforce this approach. Women are not necessarily perceived as individuals whose rights have to be protected but are rather considered as members of families who have rights but whose roles and responsibilities have to be strengthened.

As mentioned previously, problems emerged from this focus on gender relations within the family during the recent debates in parliament on the domestic violence legislation. Roughly 50% of the male members argued that domestic violence is a family matter and that what happens in the family is not a concern for public policy or legislation. They also said that the bill was not modeled on Mongolian culture and seemed too western. This weakens the position of those promoting gender equality from within the family if as an institution it is beyond the reach of government policy or legislation.

NGOs and other stakeholders are also concerned about the low status of the National Council and its inability to act without funds. The inclusion of specific women's empowerment goals in the MDGs has raised gender issues, but there is no sense that the government itself has moved these issues onto its agenda. The practical knowledge and experience of NGOs in

implementing gender programs should be used more effectively to implement and monitor the NPGE. At present there are only two NGO representatives on the National Council though relations between the government and NGOs are good. This lack of recognition of what NGOs can offer means the government does not necessarily perceive them as potential partners in implementing the NPGE. Donor agencies can strengthen these relationships by involving NGOs in implementing programs for women and gender equality, especially those with links to the EGSPRS. This approach could then be broadened to other areas of programming.

2. Contributions from Civil Society

Civil society in Mongolia is characterized by a vibrant NGO sector, currently comprising more than 1700 registered organizations involved in participatory policymaking, training, and service delivery. An increase in involvement in gender issues since the early 1990s is reflected in the registration of 78 women's NGOs in 2001. These NGOs are among the pioneers in promoting and raising awareness of democratic values and practices. International NGOs such as the Asia Foundation and the Soros Foundation have been major supporters of national NGOs involved in the democracy movement and in gender-sensitive decision making.

The Liberal Brain Pool and Women for Social Progress were among the first NGOs established in 1992 that focused their efforts on increasing women's participation in national and local elections and educating citizens about their rights and government policies and programs. Women for Social Progress has a youth program promoting civic engagement. The national CEDAW Watch Network, the first permanent NGO coalition in the country, was established in 1997. It consists of seven women's NGOs whose aim is to monitor implementation of CEDAW (signed by Mongolia in 1981); in 2001 they produced a shadow report to the Mongolian government's third and fourth reports to CEDAW. Many NGOs focus on civic engagement and education as well as gender equality and related legal reforms to reinforce and uphold women's rights. These include the Foundation for the Empowerment of Rural Women which undertakes innovative programming and studies in rural areas.

Women's organizations played an active role in the formulation of NPAW and NPGE and continue to work with the National Council. As previously stated, however, this collaboration has not extended to practical implementation or to building partnerships with key government ministries. This may be in part because of the limited experience of many NGOs in implementing programs at the grassroots level. Most women's organizations are involved in policy advocacy and research and work through intermediaries on projects directly benefiting women.⁹¹ This situation is changing as more donors implement projects through NGOs, but capacity building is needed in project management and in other areas.

Women's NGOs could extend their experience in gender analysis through training and sharing their work more widely with NGOs working with other target groups. For example, while there is increased interest in working with street children, little attention is paid to gender concerns.

⁹¹ World Bank. 2003. *Mongolia Country Gender Assessment*. Draft.

Women's NGOs could provide expertise in this area to ensure the concerns of girls as well as boys are addressed.

Gender mainstreaming also requires extensive consultations with women at the grassroots level to ensure their needs and concerns are reflected in government policies and programs at all levels. There is little or no experience with public consultations, particularly with taking the special measures that may be required to ensure women's voices are heard. NGOs are well placed to hold public sessions but will also require new skills to ensure women participate. Women's NGOs can take the lead in developing and delivering such gender-sensitive training.

3. Responses from Development Partners

Limitations on government and NGO resources have meant heavy reliance on donor support to carry out core gender mainstreaming activities. On September 27, 1999, the government of Mongolia and UNIFEM signed a memorandum of understanding to provide support for the implementation of the National Program for Advancement of Mongolian Women. Two core studies provided the basic data and analysis for policy development: the 2001 Women in Mongolia: Mapping Progress Under Transition, and the 2002 collaboration with UNDP Rural Sector in Mongolia: Issues and Options from a Gender-Responsive and Poverty-Focused Perspective based on additional primary survey and research work. These reports have been used extensively by many development planners and policy makers and are still milestones.

The Strengthening Capacity to Implement the National Program for Advancement of Women project also provides technical assistance for the National Council including one staff member for a limited period and for holding the national forum on gender and development. In December 2003, a further consultation was held to make recommendations for implementing the NPGE in all line ministries as outlined previously. UNIFEM is also seeking funding for additional initiatives to i) strengthen the capacity of the National Council, the gender focal points in line ministries, and local governments to implement the NPGE in the absence of additional government budget allocations; (ii) improve analysis and incorporate women's rights into priority areas of government such as political and economic empowerment; iii) foster economic empowerment through piloting income generating activities in areas of priority economic priorities e.g. cashmere and vegetable processing; and iv) promote women's human rights by implementing CEDAW and addressing domestic violence.

UNDP's Capacity Building for Gender-Sensitive Budgeting project is managed by the PRG of the Ministry of Finance and Economics. It aims to build government capacity to analyze and organize budgeting from a gender perspective. The project will help to analyze gender aspects of the state budget and its distribution and spending structures and will identify priorities. Initial training sessions have been held at the national and aimag levels, and studies have been carried out in key areas of employment and social services to track existing budget allocations from a gender perspective. These studies can be used as models for policy planning. Another study on gender budgeting by donors will be released later in 2004. Follow-up training and capacity building is also planned.

The United Nations Population fund (UNFPA) helps the Mongolian government to achieve its population and development goals. It is currently supporting the Third Country Programme of Assistance to Mongolia. Its goals are (i) improved quality of life of the Mongolian people through better reproductive health; (ii) a harmonious relationship between population and development, and (iii) gender equality.⁹² Their assistance is for family planning, maternal care, prevention of STIs and HIV/AIDS, prevention of abortion and management of its complications, adolescent reproductive health, and strengthening the capacity of national researchers to collect data on population and gender. Currently UNFPA supports the Capacity Building of Parliamentarians in Advocating on Reproductive Health and Population and Development Issues project and is highly supportive of the Law on Domestic Violence. With UNFPA assistance, a gender component was integrated into the population and development course curriculum of the Population and Training Research Institute and Academy of Management, and gender research modules have been developed.

The Soros Foundation runs a program that supports initiatives to advance women's rights and to reinforce their well being. It also promotes activities to enhance the sustainability of gender training programs and to eliminate violence against women.

The Asia Foundation supports legal and policy analyses on trafficking; its report on the current situation was released in 2004. The Foundation also funded a national survey on domestic violence and supported NGOs advocating the adoption by parliament of the Law on Domestic Violence. The World Bank, ADB, the Australian Agency for International Development, German-Mongolian Technical Cooperation, and the Canada Fund have also supported gender mainstreaming although on a small scale.

4. Recommendations to Promote Implementation of the NPGE

- Develop strategic projects and other initiatives to ensure implementation of the NPGE by allocating additional resources from national budgets, increasing the status of the National Council, and ensuring that existing programming will be gender sensitive and demonstrate progress in core indicators. Donors can play an important role in encouraging line ministries to mainstream gender into policies and programs by incorporating it into all projects.
- Establish clear links between the objectives of the NPGE and those of the EGSPRS. Each line ministry will report to the PRG on EGSPRS indicators, many of which align with those of the NPGE. This data and analysis can, therefore, be used to report on NPGE progress. The National Council can then focus its limited resources on areas not covered by the PRG. Additional work is also required to develop secondary indicators for the 25 already identified in the NPGE to ensure gaps and problems are tracked.

⁹² Projects and programs implemented by UNFPA. 2002.

- Directly support the leadership of the National Council in gender mainstreaming. Instead of creating a new administrative unit within the National Council, its leadership should be moved to the Deputy Prime Minister's office to enhance leadership and visibility.⁹³

⁹³ The recommendation was formulated at the ADB/World Bank National Consultation Workshop for the Country Gender Assessment in October 2004 and subsequently incorporated into an open letter submitted to the government through the office of the Deputy Prime Minister. An English translation of the recommendations included in this letter is in Appendix 4.

This assessment has suggested specific entry points for the government in core priority policy areas to ensure that gender gaps are addressed and women's voices can be heard as decisions are made. This can be done most effectively through systematic mainstreaming of gender concerns into the implementation and monitoring of existing government policy priorities. Civil society and donors also have roles to play to implement the NPGE and to address gender gaps in all their work. The following conclusions are not intended to be exhaustive but rather to highlight areas that have links with the NPGE (see Appendix 1).

A. Government

The MDGs cover women's empowerment in one target, but gender concerns are not systematically integrated into other targets, nor is the recognition that gender gaps in all areas will limit achievements. The EGSPRS represents a consolidation of priority policy options for poverty reduction for key line ministries. Essential areas to be taken into consideration include the following.

Gender-responsive, targeted programs: The EGSPRS relies on distributing the gains from economic growth to the poor to reduce overall levels of poverty. This requires identifying who is poor, their specific needs, and how they can access services. Consultations at the grassroots level with women who are the most marginalized are vital. The ability to analyze findings and to recognize the significance of inequalities in poverty is also required.

Time poverty: One result of the economic transition is increasing demands on women's time to for their families and on household production (for home consumption and market) and income generating activities outside the home. Measures to alleviate these demands should be given high priority. Government services should be readily available as should technologies that reduce domestic drudgery and low labor returns on agricultural processing. Time-use surveys could increase understanding of the contributions from women and men to household duties, of informal and formal sector production systems, and of the contributions of women to economic growth in macro economic policies.

Gender distortions in the labor market: Existing labor laws that address discrimination in hiring, promotion, and sexual harassment should be enforced. The gender dimensions of unemployment, the informal sector, and time use should be better understood; labor standards, particularly in manufacturing sectors where low cost female labor is in demand, should be upheld; and the gender gap in wages should be addressed.

Women's productivity in the informal sector: Increasing productivity and the potential of women to run SMEs is a priority. Specific business development services should be offered to women. A comprehensive gender analysis should be made of the impact of proposed land reforms

that includes all new laws and regulations so women have equal access through joint ownership. Public awareness of the importance of land and other private assets for collateral and capital in starting and expanding businesses should be increased. Government social services should meet the needs of women as entrepreneurs and economic producers as well as mothers and wives.

Women's self-help organizations: The demands on women as economic producers, mothers, and wives often isolate them. Many of the opportunities to gather and discuss their concerns that existed in rural areas during the socialist period no longer exist, and poverty is undermining traditional support networks. The limited number of projects and organizations that have encouraged women to form groups or community-based organizations to address their practical concerns have also recognized the importance of addressing social needs and long-term interests. Experience in other countries has demonstrated the importance of group dynamics to encourage innovation, to pool risks, and to build economic and social networks. These mechanisms have great potential to empower women and should be considered a basis for program delivery.

Gender gaps in education: The educational attainment of boys and the mismatch of types and levels of employment with the higher education of women must be addressed. Improving the overall quality of education and linking it to employment skills is a first step. Programs that increase incentives for boys to remain in school by addressing the need for their labor (offering stipends for example), that challenge gender stereotypes and encourage nontraditional vocations for both boys and girls, and that provide vocational training for older women retrenched from declining sectors and school leavers are also needed.

Women's health: Reducing the MMR and recognizing women's key roles in improving other health indicators such as child mortality and malnutrition are essential. Women need more time for food production and to care for family members, and poor women need better access to high quality primary health care services especially in rural areas. Empowering women overall and addressing other risks that affect their health status will improve their health outcomes.

Gender-sensitive social service reforms: Men and women are vulnerable to poverty in different ways as are women in FHH and MHH. Social welfare, insurance, and employment services should be designed to meet their different needs.

Gender-based violence: This is a priority concern of women, but the government has yet to adequately respond to this problem. Measures can be taken to support the NPGE in the context of EGSPRS policy priorities in such areas as training health professionals to respond to the special needs of victims, developing appropriate services and crisis centers for the proposed social service centers in the soum and aimag including professionally trained social workers and counselors, and using in education curricula to challenge traditional attitudes that tolerate of the abuse of women and children. Priority also needs to be given to the extensive training, awareness raising, and investment in shelters and other support required to enforce the newly passed Domestic Violence Bill.

Gender-based budgeting: This is integrated into all performance-based planning and monitoring of government poverty reduction programs building on the training and studies in the UNDP project.

Gender-sensitive public sector reforms: Specific measures are needed to protect women more effectively from discrimination, sexual harassment, and abuse in the workplace. The number of women in decision-making positions should be increased and existing labor legislation should be enforced in the civil service. Women should be consistently consulted in policy formulation and in program planning, implementation and monitoring to ensure their needs and interests are addressed. Additional support is required to implement all areas of the NPGE, not just those covered by EGSPRS priorities. This is particularly important for increasing women's participation in decision making in the public and private sectors.

Increasing leadership and resources for the National Council for Gender Equality: UNIFEM support has ended, but additional resources have not been earmarked from other government sources. The importance of the National Council in the government and in the eyes of the public is limited by this lack of resources and visibility. The Council's scope of 50% of the population and widening gender gaps in many areas should bring it more support from the legislative and executive branches of government once resources are available. Additional leadership to implement the NPGE can be provided by the new government if the National Council is attached to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister as recommended by a broad group of stakeholders.

Increasing resources and skills in MSWL: MSWL is the secretariat and coordinating body of the NPGE, but no resources have been specifically allocated to it for these functions. The existing gender unit needs appropriate skills and resources to carry out its mandate and to ensure gender concerns are taken into account in all the areas of programming.

Monitoring progress by the PRG in MOFE: The PRG can support the National Council by ensuring gender-sensitive indicators are identified and are linked to those indicators already selected to track progress on the NPGE.

Building the capacity of line ministries: All ministries require additional training and resources to ensure that appropriate data are collected and analyzed to track EGSPRS and NPGE progress. Data collection and analysis can also increase understanding within ministries of the significance of gender gaps in their programs and how policies can be adjusted to address gaps as they emerge. Gender gaps reinforce arguments for gender mainstreaming.

Coherence with EGSPRS: The EGSPRS provides a comprehensive overview of the government's priority poverty reduction policies and programs. If NPGE objectives are assessed against these priorities, common strategic areas can be identified, and specific projects can be developed. Funding can then be sought from donors to achieve both NPGE and EGSPRS objectives. This process has started under the UNIFEM framework for gender mainstreaming, but

funds must be secured, projects must be implemented, and progress must be demonstrated. With the support of donors, the EGSPRS can regain momentum.

Partnering with women’s NGOs: Building the capacity of government officials in gender analysis and gender-sensitive program planning, implementation, and monitoring is essential; women’s NGOs can help. NGOs and community-based organizations are also often better equipped for broad-based consultations at the grassroots level, especially those with experience in specific regions.

B. Civil Society

Women’s organizations have played a major role in motivating the government to address gender inequities in many aspects of Mongolian social, economic, and political life. Attention in the following areas can help ensure that women benefit equitably from development.

Gender-responsive approaches to poverty reduction: Practical programs that narrow gender gaps in all areas can demonstrate appropriate government response to women’s needs. In the past, more attention has been paid to policy, but now that the NPGE has been adopted, concrete actions have to be taken to avoid further loss of momentum. For example, the EGSPRS places great emphasis on increasing employment, the growth of SMEs in the informal sector, improving productivity in rural areas, and improving government social service delivery all of which are very important to women. The government, however, has little experience in planning and implementing gender-responsive programs. Strategic areas can be selected, and examples of appropriate initiatives can be developed and used to illustrate how existing poverty reduction programs will have to be revised to ensure that target groups—the marginalized and poor including women—are reached.

Focus on rights to reduce poverty reduction and empower women: Civil society should continue to pressure government to take its commitment to protecting women’s rights more seriously. Mongolian women’s NGOs have long experience in using international treaties and agreements (e.g. CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action) and the constitution in a wide range of development issues. While it is important that the NPGE is implemented and brings greater direct benefits to women, longer-term struggles for women’s rights cannot be neglected.

Political participation of women: Political parties make up a central element of civil society but are currently failing to ensure that women’s voices are heard. Increasing the number of female candidates, whether through quotas or other affirmative action measures, and encouraging women to take up strong roles in political activities are important steps in improving women’s participation in political life. Women’s NGOs and caucuses within political parties have the potential to influence political parties and to encourage and support women who have been elected to take up gender concerns. Women’s NGOs can also help educate women voters to claim their constitutional rights of political participation, to lobby for issues of specific concern, and to hold their elected representatives accountable.

Capacity building among NGOs: Women's NGOs can also provide gender sensitivity and gender analysis training for other civil society organizations to increase understanding of how mainstreaming gender and addressing gender gaps can maximize poverty reduction efforts.

C. Donors

Several donors are already supporting government and NGO agencies to implement elements of the NPGE and gender mainstreaming. However, these efforts are both uncoordinated and limited in scope. Gender mainstreaming is not consistent in all donor and NGO programming which undermines the efforts of the women's movement and the National Council. Donors can require gender analyses and monitoring of gender-sensitive indicators, especially with line agencies that are slow to respond to the importance of narrowing gender gaps.

Many donor agencies can also offer extensive experience from other countries to their programming in Mongolia and can provide opportunities for Mongolians to travel and learn from other regions in Asia and Europe. Opportunities should also be offered to women from NGOs and the private sector as well as to women with the potential to act as role models in their communities.

Priority needs to be given to providing additional resources to the National Council and MSWL to implement the NPGE. Again, donors have the potential to provide leadership by recognizing that gender mainstreaming is not a sufficient strategy for narrowing gender gaps; rather specific programming and monitoring of key indicators is also required. The recent work of UNIFEM has provided a framework around which specific projects could be developed, but without support to coordinate and monitor implementation, progress will continue to stall.

ADB and the World Bank will prepare gender strategies for their respective country strategies and programs based on this country gender assessment. The issues raised herein will be the focus for designing appropriate, effective interventions.

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APPENDIX 1
Gender concerns in Economic Growth S and Poverty Reduction Strategy Priority areas and links to the National Program for Gender Equality

EGSPRS Priority	Gender Concerns	NPGE Links
Increasing employment among poor and nearly poor	<p>Understanding gender dimensions of unemployment - women have three ways of contributing to SNA/non-SNA, which influences unemployment rates because of who considered economically active</p> <p>Training and employment schemes take into account the need for women to balance domestic responsibilities with productive activities</p> <p>Economic growth sectors provide opportunities to women, even if this requires training in non-traditional skills.</p> <p>Discriminatory practices in the labor market diminished by ensuring that existing legislation is enforced and accessible mechanisms are in place for redress to be made</p> <p>Public awareness is raised regarding discrimination against women and sexual harassment in the workplace</p> <p>Links established between social service programming and employment trends to ensure that incentives remain for women to participate in the formal workforce e.g. short term use of unemployment insurance to cover periods where care of sick children or adults may be necessary</p> <p>Protection of labor standards in sectors of foreign direct investment as female workforce are perceived as exploitable, cheap labor by many of these employers</p>	<p><i>Objective 6</i> To establish a mechanism to ensure gender equality in macro economic policy</p> <p><i>Objective 8</i> To improve gender relations in the labor market including access to employment, health and social insurance</p> <p><i>Objective 9</i> To ensure gender equality in household economy</p> <p><i>Indicator 6</i> - research studies conducted on gender equality in economic relations</p> <p><i>Indicator 10</i> - unemployment level</p> <p><i>Indicator 12</i> - poverty incidence</p> <p><i>Objective 14</i> To enable environment through legislation to substantially increase women's presentation in power and decision making</p> <p><i>Indicator 19</i> - percentage of women in power and decision making roles</p> <p>*No indicators provided to assess gender equality in household economy</p>

EGSPRS Priority	Gender Concerns	NPGE Links
Private sector development structural reform Informal sector and SMEs access to markets	Increased returns on women's labor in the informal sector through investments in new technologies Business development services targeted to women, especially through groups / associations that can also incorporate other services Women participate in training and increase their business skills Recognition of women's contribution to economic growth Equitable access to land and other privatized resources through gender sensitive legislation and application of regulations - proportion of land in joint ownership	<i>Objective 8</i> To improve gender relations in the labor market including access to employment, health and social insurance...including employment rights of women <i>Objective 9</i> To ensure gender equality in household economy <i>Indicator 13</i> - sex ratio in informal sector <i>Objective 4</i> To provide equal rights and opportunities for men and women in the family for ownership of property including land, ensure equal rights to make decision on properties and to implement a gender-sensitive poverty reduction policy
Regional and rural development Develop regional development plan Increase agricultural productivity Increase non-farm employment Risk management and preparedness for natural disasters Improve rural infrastructure	Time use understood within household to understand balance between different types of labor contributions to rural household economy Recognition of women's contribution to rural economy Employment opportunities for women in non agriculture activities Value added to women's labor contributions in processing through technological advances, training etc. Participation of all community members in planning, implementing and maintaining environmental and natural resource management activities	<i>Objective 11</i> To encourage equal participation and contribution of women and men in regional development and introduce measurements to assess their equal role and contribution to the development of the rural economy <i>Objective 13</i> To provide equal opportunities for employment and for creating small businesses for both women and men in rural areas and to more accurately value women's labor and economic contribution to development

EGSPRS Priority	Gender Concerns	NPGE Links
		<i>Indicator 14</i> - decrease in drop out rate in education by sex <i>Indicator 15</i> - rural employment rate <i>Indicator 16</i> - number of cooperatives and joint household businesses in rural areas
Economic and Financial sustainability Budget and finances Civil service reforms Local governance reforms	Gender sensitive policy and program impact analysis at all levels Gender-sensitive budgeting practiced at all levels Employment equity and sexual harassment considerations brought into reform process Ensuring women's participation in local level government decision making Increase in technical capacities to carry out gender analysis and gender-sensitive budgeting with increased resources applied Guidelines and circulars developed to guide local governance reforms incorporate gender dimensions	Objective 7 To introduce gender-sensitive budgeting approach in the national budgeting system by reforming national accounting and budgetary systems <i>Indicator 7</i> - introduction of gender-sensitive budgeting Objective 11 To encourage equal participation and contribution of women and men in regional development and introduce measurements to assess their equal role and contribution to the development of the rural economy Objective 14 To enable environment through legislation to substantially increase women's presentation in power and decision making <i>Indicator 19</i> - percentage of women in power and decision-making roles <i>Indicator 20</i> - percentage of women in administration and management of civil service

EGSPRS Priority	Gender Concerns	NPGE Links
Human Development education Health Social services and welfare	<p>Education</p> <p>Reinforce and protect rights to education, and women's rights in general through education system and public awareness campaigns</p> <p>Challenge gender stereotypes in education curriculum</p> <p>Quality and accessibility of education for boys and girls increases</p> <p>Vocational training appropriate for young and older unemployed</p> <p>gender dimensions of unemployment incorporated into development of vocational training programs</p> <p>gender dimensions incorporated into efforts to improve working conditions of teachers</p> <p>Health</p> <p>Increased understanding of broad range of health risks of women</p> <p>Improved health data available and applied to policy and program development PHC accessible to all women</p> <p>Target women as high risk for STIs as well as their husbands</p> <p>Gender sensitive training for medical professional concerning domestic violence and sexual abuse</p>	<p><i>Objective 1</i></p> <p>To provide sustainable environment for family welfare and development to honor family values and particularly educate young people regarding family values</p> <p><i>Objective 3</i></p> <p>To increase public awareness on gender equality and create enabling legal environment for combating domestic violence</p> <p><i>Objective 5</i></p> <p>To develop and implement national policy and programs on gender equality and the family and improve the network for providing services for poor families</p> <p><i>Indicator 2</i> - number of training programs and curricula on family and gender education</p> <p><i>Indicator 4</i> - increase in number of organizations providing services for family welfare</p> <p><i>Objective 8</i></p> <p>To improve gender relations in the labor market including access to employment, health and social insurance</p> <p><i>Objective 10</i></p> <p>To improve access of rural women and men to education and information by providing a supportive environment</p>

EGSPRS Priority	Gender Concerns	NPGE Links
	<p>Social Services</p> <p>Increased understanding of the different coping strategies of women and men to ensure programming increases self-reliance</p> <p>Increased skills among social service professionals to address the specific needs of women, especially in areas such as counseling</p> <p>Employment officers receive gender sensitive training</p> <p>Employment schemes involving public works offer opportunities equitably to women</p>	<p><i>Indicator 8</i> - percentage of men in university education</p> <p><i>Indicator 9</i> - percentage of boys in senior classes of secondary schools</p> <p><i>Objective 12</i></p> <p>To reduce maternal and child mortality through specific actions for development healthy lifestyles and removing barriers to women's health services.</p>

APPENDIX 2
Economic and Employment Data
Employment by Sector and Sex

Employed Population %	Urban						Rural		
	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female
Total	100	54.0	46.0	47.0	24.8	22.2	53.0	29.2	23.8
Agriculture	100	55.7	44.3	7.6	4.6	3.0	92.4	51.1	41.3
Mining, extraction	100	75.0	25.0	81.4	60.6	20.7	18.6	14.4	4.3
Processing industry	100	45.4	54.6	90.1	39.8	50.4	9.9	5.7	4.2
Energy, gas production, water supply	100	75.0	25.0	88.1	65.0	23.1	11.9	10.0	1.9
Construction	100	75.4	25.5	94.9	70.8	24.1	5.1	3.6	1.5
Wholesale & retail trade, home appliance repair	100	48.6	51.4	86.0	42.9	43.1	14.0	5.7	8.3
Hotels and restaurants	100	29.1	70.9	89.1	25.5	63.6	10.9	3.6	7.3
Transport & communication	100	71.7	28.3	82.2	57.5	24.7	17.8	14.3	3.6
Financial transactions activity	100	40.0	60.0	80.0	33.3	46.7	20.0	6.7	13.3
Real estate, rent, business	100	53.4	46.6	91.3	49.5	41.7	8.7	3.9	4.9
State administration, defense	100	72.3	27.7	73.2	52.2	21.0	26.8	20.1	6.7
Education	100	28.7	71.3	70.3	19.8	50.5	29.7	8.9	20.8
Health, social care	100	19.9	80.1	74.5	13.1	61.4	25.5	6.9	18.6
Other	100	55.0	45.0	91.1	48.9	42.2	8.9	6.0	2.8

Number of Employees by Sex, Occupation and Type of Work

Number of employees by sex, occupation and sectors (in thousand persons)									
	2000			2001			2002		
	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female
Total	144.4	73.6	70.8	178.6	93.3	85.3	165.8	86.2	79.6
Managerial positions	6.7	4.4	2.3	9.0	5.8	3.2	8.3	5.3	3.0
Officers	19.7	7.2	12.5	28.5	11.9	16.6	25.5	10.0	15.5
Engineers, technicians	15.2	6.7	8.5	17.4	8.4	9.0	16.6	7.6	9.0
Assistants	8.9	4.2	4.7	10.1	4.4	5.6	11.7	5.4	6.3
Service Workers	22.4	8.8	13.6	25.1	10.1	15.6	28.4	12.9	15.5
Agricultural	3.1	2.4	0.7	5.1	3.8	1.3	2.8	2.1	0.7
Manufacturing and trade	40.6	21.0	19.6	45.5	24.6	20.9	37.8	19.6	18.2
Operators	9.0	7.4	1.6	15.4	11.8	3.6	10.1	7.9	2.2
Workers	18.7	11.4	7.3	21.9	12.5	9.4	24.5	15.2	9.3

Source: Sample Survey of Employees in Enterprises and Organizations, NSO, 2000, 2001, 2002.

Average Time Spent on Employment Activities per Working Day by Sex and Minute

Activities	Urban		Rural		National Average	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
SNA Activities	286	234	474	306	375	268
Employment for establishments	217	186	44	61	134	128
Primary production activities	10	8	417	241	204	116
Of which: animal husbandry	7	7	401	236	195	113
Services for income and other production of goods	59	40	13	4	37	24
Extended SNA activities	128	229	123	333	126	277
Household maintenance, management and shopping	104	180	106	286	105	229
Care for children, the sick, elderly and disabled for own household	19	47	12	43	16	45
Community services and help to other households	5	2	5	4	5	3
Non SNA activities	1026	977	843	801	939	895
Learning	6	134	41	43	80	92
Social and cultural activities	108	69	95	75	102	72
Mass media use	155	136	76	63	117	102
Personal care and self-maintenance	647	638	631	620	640	629
Total	1440	1440	1440	1440	1440	1440

Source: NSO, 2001, Pilot Time use Survey

Mongolia's GDP by Sector 1999–2002 (% of GDP)

Sector	1999	2000	2001	2002
Agriculture	40.3	34.2	27.8	20.7
Industry	22.3	22.6	24.9	21.4
Transport and Communications	7.5	9.3	10.4	14.0
Construction	1.5	1.3	1.4	2.1
Trade	17.2	21.4	23.7	27.6
Other services	11.2	11.3	11.8	14.3

Sources: World Bank Business and Investment Guide for Mongolia, 2002; Mongolia Statistical Yearbook 2002.

APPENDIX 3

People Consulted in January 2004 Field Visit

Tugsjargal Gandhi, Member of the State Great Hural, Chairwoman of Standing Committee on Social Policy
Nansaljaviin Gerelsuren, Member of the State Great Hural
Dr. Sanjaasurengin Oyun, Member of the State Great Hural
Sodnom Chinzorig, Vice Minister, Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor
Nyamaamaa.A, Project Manager, Social Security Sector Development Program, Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor
O. Enkhsetseg, Director-General, Multilateral Cooperation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ts. Bumkhorol, Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Finance and Economy
Jambyn Jargalsaikhan, Director, Department of Economic Policy and Planning, Ministry of Finance and Economy
Sharav Munkhtseren, Macroeconomic Specialist, Poverty Research Group, Economic Policy and Planning Department, Ministry of Finance and Economy
Oyunchuimeg Dandar, Deputy Director, Population and Social Statistics Department, national Statistical Office

Sodov Sonin, Executive Director, Health Director Development Project, Ministry of Health
Pagma Genden, Director, Household Livelihoods Project
Ts. Enkhbayar, Project Manager, Housing Finance (Sector) Project

Private Sector Focus Group Discussion

Hulan Dashdavaa, Vice President, Tavan Bogd Trade Co. Ltd.
J. Oyungerel, General Director, Petrovis LLC
B. Narantsetseg, General Director, InfoCon Co. Ltd.
Zaya Ochirbat, President Federation of the Mongolian Business and Professional Women

NGO Focus Group Discussion

Tsetsenbileg Tseveen, Mongolian Academy of Science Institute of Philosophy, Sociology and Law
Davaasuren Enkhjargal, Director, National Center Against Violence
Chultem Otgonbayar, President, Foundation for the Empowerment of Rural Women
Dah-Onolt Dugerjav, Executive Director, Mongolian Women Lawyers Association
D.Munkhuu, Executive Director, Gal Golomt
T. Amgalan- Executive Director, Gender Center for Sustainable Development
Ms. Urgats - Program Officer, Liberal Women's Brain Pool (LEOS)

Barry J. Hitchcock, Country Director and Resident Representative, ADB
Nergui Dorj, Economics Office, ADB
Saha Dhevan Mayanathan, Country manager and Resident Representative, World Bank
Christopher Finch, Consultant, World Bank
Tasgaankhuu Undrakh, Program manager, Unifem

Munkhuu Dorj, Project Manager, Senior Advisor on Advocacy, Gender and Human Rights,
UNFPA

Birat Simha, Representative, UNFPA

M. Sarantuya, Employment and Gender Specialist, UNDP

Solongo Sharkhuu, Women's Program Coordinator, Mongolian Foundation for Open Society
(Soros Foundation) T. Layton Croft, Mongolia Representative, The Asia Foundation

Ch. Munkhtsetseg, Program / Admin Officer, Asia Foundation

APPENDIX 4

Asian Development Bank / World Bank Country Gender Assessment for Mongolia Consultation Workshop October 29, 2004

Proceedings

A. Opening and welcome

The workshop was opened by Yolanda Fernandez Lommen, Mongolia Country Team Leader from Asian Development Bank Headquarters. She expressed her thanks for all participants attending.

B. Address by Mr Chinzorig, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor regarding progress on NPGE implementation:

Mr. Chinzorig highlighted the different types of commitment the government has made to gender equality. At the policy level, Mongolia now uses the word “gender.” The population policy also states importance of equal participation of women and men in decision making in the nation and in the family. There is continuing cooperation between government and NGOs to achieve gender equality objectives. The focus on gender should also be seen in light of the role of the family and need to support them better. Programs to support the family include improved birth registration, passing of the domestic violence legislation and its implementation. He also acknowledged that women have been hit harder than men have by the economic transition and that macro and financial policies play an important role in supporting women to overcome these impacts.

Mr. Chinzorig went on to outline programs undertaken during the past year that included:

- gender analysis of foreign loans and their use by MSWL;
- monitoring and development of data disaggregated by sex;
- investigating the gap between urban and rural areas and affects the lives of women;
- several capacity-building seminars on gender were conducted;
- increased attention to vulnerable groups, children, and improved emergency services in rural areas.

Current priorities include programs in agricultural areas including the need to introduce innovative technology to alleviate the burden of work on women.

- Enjoyment of women’s human rights remains inadequate.
- The number of women elected to Parliament has fallen, although there is now one woman minister. This issue of women’s participation in decision making needs more attention.
- Enhancing the role of civil society groups through more support and coordination from Government.

The National Council on Gender Equality has been established with 15 members, but it is not able to conduct regular activities and is not fully institutionalized for technical and budget reasons. Some steps taken in implementation of NPGE, but more needs to be done. Strengthening a national mechanism to fully integrate gender equality into government activities is very important. It needs to be headed by a high-ranking official in government and to carry out more research to develop knowledge, evaluate progress and identify challenges and priorities. In these tasks the partnerships with ADB and the World Bank will be very valuable.

C. Address by Ms Bumkhorol, Advisor to Deputy Prime Minister regarding integration of gender equality issues into EGSPRS.

Gender equality issues have to be fully integrated for several reasons. Poverty is new to Mongolia. It is now recognized that women and men are affected differently and hence gender issues have to be addressed. This approach is fully supported by development partners. By 2003, a number of research studies on living standards and poverty showed in greater detail the impact of poverty on women. Information disaggregated by sex was presented in these surveys so it was possible to incorporate gender issues in the EGPRS.

But the question remained, how was gender to be integrated? The draft was developed and discussed at national and international levels with support from the World Bank. Mongolia should be proud of the positive assessment it received. It includes a section on gender, and gender is touched on in some other sections. The EGSPRS tried to provide analysis in areas where information was available. Issues to be highlighted include:

- equitable access to public services;
- reverse gender gap in education sector;
- maternal mortality rates remain high, especially in rural areas;
- must ensure equal property rights in relation to privatization of land;
- domestic violence;
- more unemployed women than men;
- FHH more vulnerable to poverty.

We must identify priorities and link these issues to economic growth—the major policy priority for the government. It is also important to monitor progress on poverty reduction through gender-sensitive and data disaggregated by sex.

D. Questions from participants

Ms. Dolgor, Former MP and Lawyer: Requested more detailed information on how the new government intends to implement the NPGE in the next years. How is it reflected in the Government Action Plan? Is it reflected in the budget? A key issue is the allocation of funds. Will funds actually be committed to its implementation?

Mr Chinzorig: For the next phase, priorities have not yet been discussed. The current context might be conducive to further discussion on women in parliament and decision making.

Government's Action Plan has not clearly included gender components, but does include domestic violence, employment and social security for the family, but gender not referred to explicitly.

Ms Bumkhorol: Funds for implementation of NPGE are usually in the budget of MSWL, but it does not yet know what specific funds are included.

Ms. Monkhtuya newly elected woman MP: The Parliament has begun discussions of the Government's Action Plan for 2004–2005, but there is only one sentence related to gender equality regarding women's participation, "in all sectors . . . and zero tolerance for violence, discrimination." There is some intention therefore to address gender equality but this sort of statement is not adequate. It is too general and has no meaning. The government should strengthen its approach.

Ms Bumkhorol: Yes, gender issues need to be addressed in all sectors. This is still not well understood. The sex-disaggregated database is growing and there is improved data on children.

Ms. Enkhjargal, National Aids Foundation Director: The government has made some changes, and there is a new office of Deputy Prime Minister where Ms Bumkhorol has been assigned. The establishment of the National Council for Gender Equality did not fulfill its mandate as the national machinery to address gender equality. While the MLSW has the mandate and is working to address gender equality, it is difficult to work in other sectors. Perhaps NCGE should be elevated to the office of the Deputy PM. Is there any consideration of this?

Mr Chinzorig: In principle I agree that the NCGE should play an important role in coordination with other sectors and that this should be done at the level of a Cabinet member.

UNFPA National Consultant (member of NCGE): I agree on elevating the status of the Council. Its status needs to be strengthened. What is its jurisdiction, what is the authority of its decisions? Currently no one is obliged to comply. The council should also reflect the high status of civil society organizations in Mongolia. What is the status of the gender-sensitive budgeting (GSB) project?

Mr Chinzorig: The government has considered specialized agencies for vulnerable groups such as children, but it is not clear that this is the best approach. It might be better to consider their issues in the mainstream. I agree that the status of NCGE means it can only advise and recommend; it cannot issue decisions. Raising the status of the Head of NCGE might help. Some councils do have decision-making power. This issue can still be considered.

Ms Bumkhorol: The GSB project has been supported by UNDP over the last 2 years, but it is too early to see the results. [Lorraine Corner will be discussing this later.] Officials originally could not understand the term; now they are at least aware and willing to consider it. We realize that there is a lack of data disaggregated by sex. Unfortunately, it will not be possible to assess the 2005 budget 2005 from a gender perspective but it will be possible in 2006.

E. Presentation of the findings and recommendations from the Country Gender Assessment by Helen Thomas, consultant to ADB

The main findings were presented to highlight the links between objectives and targets of the NPGE and the EGSPRS. Recommendations were outlined. Some questions for clarification followed the presentation and it was agreed where revisions would be made to the text.

In concluding the morning sessions, Ms. Bumkhorol suggested that participants prepare a recommendation to parliament from this meeting regarding the need to incorporate gender issues in the Government Action Plan. A draft has been already been prepared that identifies domestic violence, zero tolerance of violence against women, reflecting gender concerns in Government Action Plan and budget. Recommendations can be made on how to strengthen this approach. This suggestion was welcomed by all participants.

F. Presentation by Lorraine Corner, UNDP Gender-Sensitive Performance Budgeting Consultant

Identified different approaches taken by the project including:

- Civil society approach
- Research—analysis of past budget impacts
- Woman-targeted expenditures
- Women and girls as beneficiaries
- Gender analysis of policies, e.g., taxation
- Civil society inputs into budgeting processes often at local level
- Parliamentary scrutiny and inputs to budgeting processes

- Focus on allocations for women
- In-government approach
- Essential tool for gender mainstreaming
- Budgeting PLUS gender analysis
- Integrated into mainstream budgeting processes

UNDP GSB PROJECT I

- 3 sector research studies on gender analysis
- Public Budget for Social Welfare Sector
- Donor aid and loans in employment and social security sectors
- Public budget on employment sector
- GSB training: national and aimag workshops
- Regional training for staff from MOF
- Introduction to GSB and international experiences
- Follow up UNDP gender-sensitive performance budgeting project – tentative components
- Capacity building and institutionalization of gender analysis for budget staff in two sectors

- Capacity building of budget staff and institutionalization in MOF
- Strengthening capacity of poverty monitoring data user and provider groups to provide and use gender-sensitive data in monitoring performance in two sectors
- Strengthening technical support capacity for gender analysis of budgets
- Strengthening capacity of civil society to use research and data for monitoring for accountability

G. Ms Enkhtuvshin, PRG – Poverty Monitoring Processes

This presentation provided an update on activities to incorporate more gender-sensitive indicators into the EGSPRS monitoring process.

H. Group work requested to identify specific priority areas of programming that could be included in the recommendations from this meeting for Parliament

GENDER AND GOVERNANCE PRIORITY AREAS

Gender sensitization of policies:

Actions to be taken

- Make policies gender sensitive at the national ministerial level including gender sensitive budgeting.
- Develop a common understanding of gender at the ministerial level. Start these activities right now as the policies are being formulated.
- Revitalize the national machinery on gender equality: create the gender equality council to be chaired by Vice Deputy Speaker and create secretariat service under Deputy Prime Minister.
- Have a special staff person in charge of gender equality issues including links with the ministries.

A favorable framework for gender equality in politics, specifically focus on women's participation:

Actions to be taken

- Amend election laws, in particular, to change mechanisms for candidate nominations, to waive the financial contribution requirements for women candidates,
- Amend the law on political parties.
- Amend the public service law specifically to require that there be both male and female candidates for political positions and promotions and to refine criteria for hiring in public service.
- Develop gender equality standards in public service. This will require donor support.

Gender and traditional stereotypes:

Actions to be taken

- Study current practices in laws and regulations that have potential for discrimination. This study should cover every area of politics, economics, culture, media, and family.
- Eliminate such provisions and practices.

- Amend the law on media to prohibit any information that promotes gender discrimination.
- Adopt a gender equality law that will ban any form of gender discrimination.
- Incorporate in the program of the Government the structure and mechanisms to implement the domestic violence law (the current law does not have implementation mechanisms).
- Revise the regulations and procedures for implementing the land privatization law to include an analysis of potential discrimination and disparities they could create.
- Review the Law on Family in particular the provisions on inheritance, divorce, alimony, and social allowances.

GENDER AND SOCIAL SERVICES PRIORITY AREAS

Reverse gender gap in education:

Actions to be taken

- Increase admission of male students in pedagogical universities.
- Promote male professions in informal training, distance learning, short-term professional training.
- Identify reasons and foundations of male stereotypes.

Health of men and women:

Actions to be taken

- Promote health education for men (awareness raising for unhealthy behaviors).
- Prepare and increase the number of doctors who specialize in men's illnesses.

Improving social insurance policies:

Actions to be taken

- Increase efficiency of social insurance.
- Increase coverage of insurance particularly of rural population.

GENDER AND HOUSEHOLD-BASED ECONOMY PRIORITY AREAS

Introduction of new technology in household economy.

Actions to be taken

- Introduce household utilities and machinery.
- Provide information and technology for diversifying businesses for informal entrepreneurs that takes into account the nearness and specifics of markets.
- Exchange of information and experience and replicate good practices among informal and household businesses.
- Create favorable a legal framework for informal sector.

Promote microfinance

Actions to be taken

- Create and promote cooperatives and self-help groups.

- Create a favorable legal environment for cooperatives specifically to mitigate financial risks.
- Improve internal oversight of financial resources.

Improve management of household economy

Actions to be taken

- Improve the skills required to effectively manage a household economy.

Unofficial translation

From: B. Munkhtuya
Member of Parliament

To: Barry Hitchcock
Resident Representative
ADB

November 13, 2004

Dear Sir,

I would like to express my appreciation for your sending to me the recommendations of the participants of the joint ADB/WB sponsored consultation on Mongolia Country Gender Assessment.

I agree and support the following recommendation of the consultation stating that, "Widening gender disparities is a factor to poverty among the population in the country. And therefore, increasing women's participation is one of the main resources to foster economic growth and to reduce poverty." I would like to express my interest and commitment to cooperate with you towards promoting women's participation.

I am pleased to inform that the recently approved Platform of Action of the new government now states that, "The government will increase women's participation in every aspect of public and social sectors and will eliminate any form of discrimination against women. It will also cultivate a culture of intolerance towards violence against women."

To increase representation of women in policy and decision-making positions we, women in the parliament, have established a Women's Caucus, myself elected as a chair.

I would like to express my appreciation of your effort to hold a very fruitful consultation which developed a range of comments and recommendations in the field. I wish you all the best in your future work.

Best regards,

B. Munkhtuya
Member of Parliament
Mongolia

List of Participants

Parliament

Ms. Monkhtuya, MP

Government

Mr. Chinzorig, Deputy Minister, MSWL

Ms. S. Regzen, Secretary of National Gender Committee, MSWL

Mr. Narangerel, Director, Population Policy Department, MSWL

Ms. Bayarmaa, Officer, Legal policy department, Ministry of Justice

Ms. Nyamsuren, First Secretary of Multilateral department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ms. Bulganmaa, Public Service Management Department, Ministry of Trade and Industry

Ms. Ts. Bumkhorol, Advisor to Deputy Prime Minister

Mr. D. Tsedenbal, Officer, Public service management department of the MOFE

Mr. Ganbold, Deputy Director, Macroeconomic Policy Department, MOFE

Ms. Sh. Munkhtseren, PRG

Ms. Enkhtuvshin, PRG

Ms. Byambadorj, PRG

Ms. B. Khishigaikhan National Human Rights Commission

Ms. Sainbayar, Legal Advisor, Ministry of Environment

Mr. Davaadorj, Head, Policy Planning Department, Ministry of Health

Ms. D. Oyunchimeg, National Statistical Office

Ms. Dolgor, Former MP

NGOs

Ms. Ch. Bazar, Zorig Foundation

Ms. A. Odgerel, Zorig Foundation

Ms. Byambajav, Mongolian Women Federation

Ms. Zanaa, CEDAW Watch

Ms. O. Enkhtuya, Liberal Women's Brain Pool

Ms. D. Erdenechimeg, Mongolian Democratic Socialist Women's Federation

Ms. Enkhjargal, National Aids Foundation

Ms. D. Enkhmaa, Center against violence

Ms. Amgaa, Coalition of Mongolian Women's NGOs

Ms. Suren, Disabled women's union

Ms. L. Nyamsambu, Mongolian Employers Federation

Ms. Solongo, Women's Leadership Fund

Ms. Ichinnorov, Women's Leadership Fund

Mr. Chimeddorj, Confederation of Trade Union

Ms. Munkhuu, Gal Golomt

Ms. G. Bulganzaya, Social Development Center

Ms. B. Undarmaa, Women Lawyers Union

Ms. Chinchuluun, Fund for Mongolian women

Donors

Ms. Erdenejargal, Open Forum

Ms. Sukhgerel, USAIDS
Ms. Undrakh, UNIFEM
Ms. Uran, UNICEF
Ms. Delia Barcelona, UNFPA
Ms. Michelle, ADRA
Ms. Tumursukh, GTZ
Ms. Lorraine Corner, Gender Consultant, UNDP
Ms. Sarantuya, Program officer, UNDP