

Report for DD 6

Development Dialogue 6: *Harnessing Culture for Development in Mongolia*

The sixth dialogue on “Harnessing Culture for Development in Mongolia” was held in UN House on 14 February 2014 in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism (MCST).

The dialogue was organized as a Panel Discussion. Discussions were moderated Ms.Ts.Oyungerel, Minister of Culture, Sport and Tourism of Mongolia.

Prior to the start of the panel discussion there was a brief presentation of the issues to structure the discussion. The panel discussion were followed by an open exchange of views among participants.

Mr.Saurabh Sinha, senior economist of UNDP welcomed guests and introduced panelists, invited **Mr.Sezin Sinanoglu**, UN Resident Coordinator, and UNDP Resident Representative, for the opening speech.

Panelists were **Mr.Yo.Otgonbayar**, Member of the Parliament of Mongolia (former minister of Education and Culture), **Dr.J.Dolgorsuren**, dean of the School of theater and performing arts, University of Arts and Culture, **Dr.N.Bandi**, director of Hustai national park, **Ms.Sh.Baigalmaa**, manager for regional development and social performances, Oyu Tolgoi LLC, and **Dr.D.Gansukh**, director of tourism research and training center.

Over 100 people representing different stakeholders and players of culture and tourism, including policymakers, government officials, various cultural and tourism organizations, participated in discussions.

Specific impacts of the Development Dialogue:

Key messages to the audience at the beginning of the discussions were delivered by **Ms. Sezin Sinanoglu**, who emphasized that: a) the culture, including indigenous, traditional knowledge is a economic and social aspect that may have a significant impact on economic growth and progress and development, it must be put in right directions and practices; c) culture is not immutable, cultural practices recognizes and values “ways of doing things” all changed, whether it is internally or externally influenced, and accepts innovations.

The same point was shared by **Ms. Beatrice Kaldun**, chief of culture unit and culture program specialist of UNESCO Beijing office, who also brought UNESCO position that culture both enables and drives sustainable development through the specific contributions that it makes – as knowledge capital and a sector of activity – to promote inclusive social and economic development, environmental sustainability, harmony, peace and security. For UNESCO, cultural dimension of development underlies the protection and promotion of cultural diversity in different forms.

Following issues arisen on the agenda for discussion at the forum:

- How can be created a sense of community in Mongolia, where the nomadic lifestyle creates a cultural community distinct from a geographical community?
- What are the unique features of Mongolian culture that can contribute to development?
- How can these features be fostered or encouraged?
- What are the elements of Mongolian cultural industries, such as ecological tourism, art, music (e.g. morin khuur, khumii (throat) singing, etc.) that can be harnessed to contribute to economic growth and employment?
- In what ways can creative industries or innovations be encouraged in Mongolia as a means of diversifying the economy?
- How can the youth be encouraged to contribute to growth of culture and creative industries?
- What should the government do to include culture in development policy as well as promote the growth of cultural industries? What can other development partners do? What is the role of the civil society, the academia, and the media in fostering culture-led development in Mongolia?

Key points and thoughts addressing agenda items expressed by participants are summarized below:

- Uniqueness of Mongolian culture is that it is very well interlinked with nature and environment, its cornerstones have strong grounds of a nomadic lifestyle, positive relationship of human with nature, mongolian culture absorbed and keeps nomadic and humanistic aspects in its most classic forms;
- At the same time Mongolian culture is being a bridge between other civilizations and cultures of oriental people due to historical roles it played, making it most immune and resistant;
- there is no culture of government, or ministry, there is only one that of a people, thus it is everyone's responsibility to be involved in keeping, protecting and inheriting this unique culture; it must be supported by combined efforts of all interested parties and strong government policy;
- to expand creative culture industries, based on well-managed cultural tourism and contribute to overall growth and development, make employment and income generating opportunity for people;
- a challenging, attractive aspect of study is how culture is being affected and changed by more modernized and urbanized lifestyles, especially by dynamic territorial and social groups such as special interest groups, youth,
- listen to researchers and scholars, cultural and tourism specialists, and encourage them to be part of the in-depth study and policy formulations;
- private businesses must actively involved in the protection of cultural heritages and invest;
- training is a vital part of this - pay more attention to the public cultural education, especially cultural education of children and youth, train them, considering culture in historical context, train in cultural management, enable youth to be critical and creative;

It is concluded that strong public policy must emphasize an increase of cultural education among children and youth, an increase of public funding, encourage investment from private sector, all possible spheres of "ways of doing things", including cyber, social media and technological innovations to be used for the cultural development. All comments and ideas will be further considered by the ministry, by policymakers and relevant organizations, expand this type of discussions across the country, continue and involve more and more people.

In her closing remarks, Minister Ts. Oyungerel says: “The fact that we are discussing a cultural issues today demonstrates that Mongolia is joining and going together with more globalized world, when every country within UN and UNESCO community prioritizes culture as an essential aspect of a sustainable development and growth”, and expressed her appreciation to UNDP for leadership and close partnership in successful organization of the dialogue. Ms.Sezin Sinanoglu emphasized diversity and richness of ideas, comments, and intensity of mongolian culture, acknowledged an active participation of youth representatives.