



*Empowered lives.
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LESSONS LEARNED FROM ELECTORAL SUPPORT TO MONGOLIA 2008-2012

Ulaanbaatar



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Ulaanbaatar
2013

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SUPPORT TO MONGOLIA
2008-2012**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the 2008 parliamentary election, which experienced numerous problems and sparked violence in the capital, Mongolia saw for the first time enough political will to reform the electoral system. A number of reforms were deliberated in 2010 and final amendments passed by Parliament, in December 2011 only six months before the parliamentary elections in June 2012. These changes included a mixed parallel electoral system with 48 seats elected in each constituency by a first-past-the-post system and 28 elected on a closed proportional representation list on one ballot; a new voter's list based on the census and mandated by the General Authority for State Registration (GASR) with new ID cards; automated counting through vote counting machines; NGOs being accredited to observe both polling and counting; and out-of-country voting.

Considering the number of new features introduced and the shortage of implementation time, the parliamentary elections in June 2012 were remarkably smooth and peaceful. Other improvements included: increased inclusivity and the number of women and independent candidates elected, the voter register was more accurate, and the results were faster and more widely accepted. In general, voters did not seem fazed by the new system, including an updated ballot and use of automated machines, though the number of invalid votes was around 3.6%.

Despite this success, a number of areas still need improvements. Amendments need to be passed with ample time to allow the General Election Commission (GEC) to organise the elections effectively and for voter education to be conducted properly. Because of the rush smart IDs were not distributed in time.

Further, while the 20% women's quota was welcomed, the number of females in Parliament only increased from 3 to 11 seats. Placement on the ballot and quotas in the party law may help in the future. It was also found that women candidates had a better chance of election on a multi-member, rather than single member ticket (i.e. on a team with a male candidate).

UNDP's support through a media campaign reaching out voters has helped and training of journalists on gender sensitive reporting has improved coverage but more needs to be done in this area. Support to women MPs especially through the new women's caucus will help raise issues, but there should also be an em-

phasis on gender awareness among male MPs in order to help gender sensitive legislation, committees, procedures, and budgeting.

Campaign financing remains a problem. Parties charge money for candidacies, and each candidate has to privately finance his or her campaign. Some candidates, especially women, may find it difficult to raise funds. The campaign finance law, therefore, needs to be reformed, its implementation better monitored, and sanctions enforced. Weak limits and restrictions mean that rich candidates and parties have a better chance at election. No monitoring and enforcement means that business interests can unduly influence parties and MPs after they are elected, and abuse of state resources such as promising positions, or awarding contracts goes unchecked.

Despite sanctions on voters and political parties, vote buying is still prevalent and hard to eradicate when unemployment is high and salaries are low. More civic education is needed to instil the value of the vote and parties should be discouraged by punitive action.

The GEC would benefit from regular meetings with and feedback from political parties and CSOs in order to encourage more transparency, better mutual understanding and contribute to conflict prevention. The GEC is currently unable to monitor campaign finance and media effectively and needs to be strengthened in this function.

Finally, both the GEC and political parties need to identify factors that cause low voter turnout, both nationally and abroad. Political parties also need to attract votes and inspire young voters who may feel disillusioned with and excluded from the political process.

1. BACKGROUND

Until 2008, the voter registration system was weak, vote counting was rigged, vote buying widespread with few sanctions for violations of the law, and there was no gender quota resulting in only three women MPs elected. Reforms were needed and were made.

While all key stakeholders agreed that reform was needed after 2008, a consensus on the electoral system, with approximately 2/3 of the seats remaining constituency-based and 1/3 from party lists, was reached only in December 2011 af

ter long debates between two major parties – Democratic Party and Mongolian People’s Party.

The Law on Parliamentary Elections, approved in December 2011, introduced several substantial changes both to the electoral system and the administration of elections: i) the move from a plurality system to a mixed system (out of 76 seats, 48 will be elected from local districts and 28 will be elected from a national list); ii) the introduction of a 20% quota for women candidates; iii) the use of automated vote counting machines; iv) for the first time, Mongolians living overseas were able to vote; v) civil servants, and not political party nominees, were appointed to work as electoral committee and polling officers; vi) new smart biometric identity cards were to be introduced but due to a delay in production and distribution were not used for the parliamentary election but were used in the local elections in November 2012; vii) voter registration became the responsibility of the GASR, rather than the District Electoral Sub-Committees. In addition, the capital city municipal council and general parliamentary elections were conducted simultaneously.

These measures were expected to address some of the challenges identified during previous elections including the quality of the voter register, lengthy manual counting processes leading to delays in the announcement of results, and low levels of women’s political participation.

Despite the changes, Parliament has a long list of further electoral and political reforms that are currently being discussed and drafted. A number of these laws seek to strengthen the legal framework for elections and to also increase the representation and inclusiveness of Mongolia’s political system. Two of the proposed laws, a political party law and political finance law, specifically seek to address issues that relate to citizens ability to run for office, while a proposal to consolidate all the electoral related laws into one overarching electoral code would more effectively coordinate and simplify the current legal framework for parliamentary, presidential and local elections. Another issue identified for revision is electoral dispute resolution, where an unclear delineation of authority in the legal framework and limited public knowledge on its implementation and procedures has the ability to undermine positive electoral and political reform and events in Mongolia.

The reform process from 2010 to 2011 highlighted that stakeholders would like to expand the consultative manner in which reforms are drafted and discussed. This consultative process would not take away from the MP’s leading role, but it

would engage a broader list of citizens and groups to participate and engage in relevant reform that could strengthen the overall process and outcomes.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF REFORMS: 2012 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

2.1. General election commissin (GEC)

The GEC is perceived as less partisan than in prior elections, but it still needs to be protected further from political interference especially when it comes to accepting candidate nominations, monitoring political finance, and enforcing sanction for violations. The members of GEC are composed of 5 members nominated by parliament, 2 members by the President, and 2 members by the Supreme Court. The GEC needs to be stronger in dealing with the parties, develop better conflict management skills and hold regular party liaison meetings, while complying with the law to support their decisions.

Some interlocutors noted that that the GEC had no official results hour by hour for every polling station to check for fraud and that the GEC needs to be more transparent about the data on their website as they are not publishing a full report.

In the local elections held in November 2012, the capacity of the electoral management body was further tested in registering more candidates, printing more ballots, and the counting machines required different programming. Despite the challenges and shortage of time, the GEC and DEC successfully administered the local elections.

2.2. Voter registration

In the past, registration procedures were one of the areas most alleged as fraudulent, especially as a result of the 2008 parliamentary elections where multiple registrations were hugely problematic and contributed to a lack of trust in election results.

To address this, the responsibility of maintaining the voter list was shifted from the GEC to the Government Authority for State Registration (GASR). The voter's list in 2012 was much improved, though problems were still noted such as voter's names listed twice or added to the wrong family. Most complaints about civil registry were about discrepancies of address. When a citizen moves to a new

address he or she must register but when you move out citizens tend not to de-register so this creates a pile of voters in same address.

Thought the process of renewed civil registry started in 2010, and the inclusion of biometric data on new electronic IDs were introduced in 2012, the civil registry was incomplete and unable to finish distribution of the new IDs before the June elections. As a result, the majority of voters used paper identification and voter registration documents, which were checked against voter registration lists. Eventually all will come to the polls with a new smart-ID that includes biometric information and can be read in the polling station. This will prevent problems like address discrepancies, which happened in the 2012 Parliamentary elections from happening in the future. GASR informed that 96% of voters had received their identity cards before the local elections.

The allocation of increased number of voters to 1,800 per polling station based on address, so it was important to inform voters of their new polling station if changed. In the new law, the district civil registry officer was responsible for allocation of voters, and citizens were asked to check their name on the list on the website www.burtgel.mn or on a printed list and posted in public place. Migrant workers were responsible for transferring their vote to a new polling station up to one month before the election but ran the risk that many might not have done it.

2.3. Gender equality and women's empowerment

The new 20% quota for female candidates was implemented in the 2012 election, however only 14.5% of parliamentarians are female, positioning Mongolia below the world average of 20.5% . Therefore, the quota did not work as effectively as hoped—women gained only eight additional seats.

Women need to be elected not only through a proportional list but on constituencies as well. Multi-member tickets could increase women's representation. Some parties put women candidates high on their ballot, but others did not. There is no specific regulation which puts women into winnable positions.

With support from UNDP, the National Committee on Gender Equality (NCGE) organized a media campaign “Women Can Do”, which helped portray women as strong. But the media also needs to show what specific actions and results women MPs have achieved. Male MPs are more visible in promoting legal reform, even though policy inputs may be equal behind the scenes. As such, voters perceive male candidates as more effective politicians. With support from UNFPA, NCGE organized a three-stage training for journalists with the aim to increase fe-

male candidate visibility and developed cooperation agreements with media outlets to encourage journalists to avoid discrimination against women MPs and not to focus on age, family status or appearance.

Women were discouraged to run due a lack of confidence as well as funds, so one candidate initiated a ‘microphone and podium’ weekly training, inviting women who were willing to participate in the election, and showing them how to increase visibility through social media, promote oneself at party national committee meetings, how to take advantage of podiums/microphone, media training, article writing, speaking slowly and clearly, and honing image and message in short sentence answers or sound bites. Women could test their skills in speeches and tackle policy questions at small events training as a politician before the big campaign.

Of the eleven elected women, all but three were new and will need capacity development on their role as MPs and how parliament works. Training is also needed on budgeting, how a bill becomes a law, how a standing committee works, how to reach the public, use the media, and manage public expectation of women MPs.

These women MPs benefited from the 2011 reform process and introduction of quotas and have organized themselves into an informal women’s caucus (not a formally recognized structure within parliament), and despite coming from different political parties, the members have committed to working on introducing a ‘gender agenda’ in parliament. Women MPs will still face significant challenges both in unifying across parties to achieve common goals, as well as in forming alliances with their male colleagues to pass legislation. It is important for them to have opportunities to network with their counterparts in other countries to learn from their collective experience so that they can utilize lessons learned by other women MPs.

A pre-election survey showed that voters would vote for women and thus encouraged political parties to accept more women on the list especially in two-member districts. Some interlocutors spoke of the assumption that women candidates are perceived to be less corrupt than male counterparts but this remains an assumption and has yet to be proven.

Following the regional conference on Increasing Women’s Political Participation, further work around this area was discussed at an in-depth regional workshop, where the newly elected women members of Parliament, political party members, academics, media, CSOs and government officials developed a Mongolian National Action Plan for Political Equality in Elected Office. The main political

parties are willing to support this plan. The international community needs to ensure further peer-to-peer networking among women MPs in the region.

Gender equality tends to be solely focused on representation numbers, but little gender mainstreaming has been undertaken. MPs, committees and their support staff would also benefit from gender sensitive training on legislating, budgeting and processes.

2.4. Campaign finance

Internal party democracy is weakened by political parties that do not select candidates in a democratic way and use a discriminatory ‘candidate tax’ with no standardised quota in the party law. Also, each candidate has to privately finance his or her campaign. For this reason, the number of businessmen among members of parliament is quite high. The influence of business interests in politics and money from big corporations as a means to fund campaigns undermines representation and needs to be curbed. These groups tend to win the tenders announced by the government for large mining and infrastructure projects, and they exert influence and pressure on the government via the mass media.

The system currently favours incumbents who have business links to raise funds through networks and creates barriers for those candidates, especially women or from smaller parties, without networks and connections. There are neither real limits to campaign donations nor required disclosures enforced. Thus, the Political Finance Law needs to be strengthened and state funding has been suggested as a potential remedy. This unfair candidate tax imposed by political parties was too heavy and created tension within the party as some paid and some women candidates, in particular, opposed paying the tax.

One positive step noted was the GEC enforced campaign regulations more strictly than it had in previous elections. Parties were required to submit campaign platforms, which were audited by the National Audit Office to ensure that they would not make promises that were not economically feasible. The parties were held to these platforms in their advertising.

2.5. Vote buying and abuse of office

There were reports of vote buying, abuse of office and other fraud during the election campaigns for the 2008 parliamentary elections and the 2009 parliamentary by-election, which exacerbated citizens’ distrust in electoral results.

Voters have the right to make their choice without interference. Some candidates and political parties allegedly promised jobs or positions, or made individual promises such as small grants if voted into power. Whether these allegations are true or not, limited employment opportunities especially at provincial level are huge incentives and vulnerable to patronage and abuse of power. Provisions prohibiting activities and making promises to attract voters and stronger sanctions for violation were introduced. Hence enforcing these sanctions will deter practice.

In an attempt to reduce vote buying, there was a shift from holding not only candidates and political parties accountable but also voters. A poster campaign highlighted penalties for vote selling with examples such as taking a ballot paper to the polling station, using a fake ID, trying to take photo of the ballot, or intentionally showing the mark on ballot paper to others.

2.6. Voting

Concerns about ballot printing were raised in 2008 as the process was not fully transparent or available for monitoring, and election watchdogs were not given the chance to observe the watermarking process, a crucial security feature. In 2012, however, domestic observers monitored the printing of ballots 24 hours before to reduce the possibility of fake ballot production.

While, in general it is believed that the process of voting for the constituency election on one side of the ballot and for the proportional election on the other worked quite well, the number of invalid votes could be reduced further in future elections. It is believed that placing the two systems—constituency-based and proportional party list—on one ballot may have caused some confusion to voters.

Another new feature of the voting process was the installation of video cameras, which was intended to enhance transparency. However, some have reported that political parties may use the surveillance as a means to intimidate voters—suggesting that how they vote is being watched.

Polling station voter allocation was increased in the reforms. Locations in 2012 had to accommodate 1,900 voters, up from 1,600 in 2008. In many instances, voters were transferred to new stations, which may have been problematic for some. Other location issues included accessibility for people with disabilities, long lines, and no cover for the ballot, compromising the secrecy of the vote. Apparently a

new law will insist on a cover for the ballot and for party monitors and observers to stand three to four metres away from the automated counting machine.

As was required by the law, there was a major shift from partisan poll workers to civil servants to enhance independence and impartiality in the administration of the elections by the GEC.

2.7. Voter participation

While the electoral reform agenda contributed successfully to a more inclusive and representative parliament in 2012, voter turnout over the last decade has steadily declined. Unlike previous elections that were organized on weekends, the 2012 election was held on a Thursday, which was set as an official holiday. It was expected that organizing the election on a weekday would increase voter turnout, but this was not the case.

Figure 1: Voter Turnout in State Great Hural Elections

Year	Voter Turnout
1992	95.6%
1996	92.1%
2000	82.4%
2004	80.6%
2008	76.5%
2012	67.3%

Voter turnout dropped to the lowest level of all the six elections in the democratic era from a high of 96% in 1992. Turnout has declined in each election since 1992, but this year marked the steepest decline from a previous election with approximately 9.2% fewer voters going to the polls. In an opinion poll just before the June elections, 75% in Ulaanbaatar and 88% in the countryside said they intended to vote, but on election day, only 65% did.

UNDP supported the GEC in producing voter education materials, posters, updating websites and TV ads, so it is believed that voter awareness of the new system, ballots and counting machines may not have been the problem. Low voter turnout could in fact have related to procedural factors such as voting on a weekday and only until 8pm, whereas polls were open until 10pm in previous elections; the reduced period to thirty days for the election campaign; and registration and voting processes.

Other reasons could include migration or a more systematic decline in civic engagement of citizens, in particular youth. There has been a steadily rising public cynicism regarding party politics, which has failed to deliver improved living standards for the majority of the population despite the recent ‘mineral boom’ that boosted last year’s economic growth to 17% and low voter turnout may reflect this.

When parties receive fewer votes than expected, the response should not be pre-emptive allegation of fraud and corruption. Such allegations have generally been unclear and often unsubstantiated. This type of response undermines any growing trust in the electoral process and may also explain the declining number of voters.

2.8. Diaspora voting

The joint administrative regulations of the Foreign Ministry and the GEC came out in April 2012 after many consultations. The government allocated 300 million tugriks from the state budget to put administrative arrangements in place for out-of-country voting. Out of 80,000 eligible voters, 4,320 registered for the election, and 2,779 participated in the first diaspora voting on 10 June 2012 organized by Mongolian embassies and consulates. These votes were counted on 28 June 2012 and no irregularities were reported. The voter turnout was very low at only 3.5% of eligible voters abroad. In the future, expatriate Mongolians should be consulted to assess barriers to voter participation.

2.9. Vote counting

In 2008, there was a lot of mistrust in the counting process and results, which contributed to unrest in the days after the election. To address this concern, automated counting machines were introduced to avoid opportunities for rigging. In addition, to increase trust and transparency in the new counting machines, a random sample of two districts per aimag conducted a parallel manual count of the ballots to check for discrepancies. Though, few discrepancies were found, losing parties tended to blame the counting machines and the software as the problem rather than their campaign. Voters appeared to trust the machines more than the parties.

After preliminary results started coming in, some parties made allegations of fraud and faulty programming of the voting machines, which prompted a manual recount of votes in all districts. All machines were found to have correctly count-

ed the ballots. But despite this confirmation, there continues to be a lack of trust in these new technologies and people feel that the machines could have been easily manipulated. In general, though, the results proved to be quite accurate with the parallel manual count and much faster than in 2008.

There were some tally issues however. The machines may not have been able to optically recognise half marks, but it did recognize that a voter could have a valid vote for the constituency and an invalid for the proportional but did not invalidate the whole ballot paper. In total, somewhere between 3.6% and 5% of the vote was found to be invalid, though it is expected that this will decrease as the new system becomes more familiar. It is also hoped that political parties will increase their trust in this new process since it was significantly more credible than in 2008.

2.10. Electoral dispute resolution

After the election, the parliament of Mongolia had four empty seats (GEC had submitted credentials of 72 candidates), with some waiting for a by-election, some not filled due to a prolonged dispute over allegations of vote buying. Prolonged disputes leaving parliamentary seats vacant can have a negative impact on the credibility of the election.

Due to the existing gaps in the legal framework between the mandate of the administrative court and the constitutional court, the lack of the public awareness on procedures for filing complaints and the role of the GEC needs further clarification in order to strengthen electoral dispute resolution processes.

2.11. Conflict prevention

As a result of the reforms, many issues that frustrated the electorate in previous elections were addressed. As a result, the 2012 election ran smoothly and peacefully and proved that, while there were remaining issues with registration, disputes and campaign finance, political parties and stakeholders accepted the results. Further reform is also needed to consolidate the gains made on the last successful election. Other causes such as corruption, unemployment and lack of service delivery are more likely to contribute to growing unrest than elections per se. Though if these causes are not addressed sufficiently, elections can be a trigger to vent such frustrations.

2.12. Media

The mass media have played an increasingly significant role in election campaigns in recent years. Political parties used both paid and free media in election campaigning. The National Public Broadcasting service, aired freed broadcasts of voter education programmes according to a distribution scheduled prepared by the GEC and provided equal treatment to political parties, coalitions and candidates.

Paid election campaign advertisements on private radio and TV stations are not supposed to exceed 10% of total airtime, but campaign ad saturation reached above that. This is particularly important because private stations often air the views of their owners, who are businessmen and politicians. Contrary to the belief that a shorter campaign period of 30 days can reduce costs, the unit cost actually became higher. The advantage of a shorter campaign period is that voters do not suffer from campaign fatigue.

A media regulatory framework and monitoring is needed to address the explosion of media outlets, mainly new TV stations that emerged and closed after the election. The escalating costs of private media may encourage rich candidates or parties to set up their own TV stations for their campaign, which undermines freedom and plurality of the press. Mongolian voters tend to vote for frequent faces on TV so high visibility affects their choice.

2.13. Monitoring by NGOs

Non-governmental organizations were allowed to monitor the compliance of election committees, other organizations and officials participating in the electoral processes for the first time. In previous elections, they could only monitor the pre-electoral phase, the pre-election voters list, and the campaign. These NGO observers have helped dispel some perceptions of election fraud that have marred previous elections, and enhanced confidence in the democratic process.

GEC developed a procedure for monitoring of elections by NGOs based on proposals received from the Civil Society Monitoring Network. However the accreditation of NGOs proved to be difficult as NGO monitoring was done for the first time in Mongolia.

To avoid a bottleneck in the future, observers could register with the DEC and receive accreditation at the provincial level. Likewise, DEC and polling staff need

to be more aware of the role of observers and allow full access. CSOs have a network and coordination group, but this needs to be opened up to allow new and more rural-based CSOs to observe.

2.14. Local elections

The local elections were held on November 21, 2012. These elections, like the parliamentary election, adopted a mixed parallel electoral system. Unlike the parliamentary elections, the new identification cards with biometric data were used universally for the first time. These elections were delayed by one month as the law and preparations were not ready. Some people cautioned about lower voter turnout among groups such as herders who had to move their livestock for the winter. On the other hand, this later date provided a longer period for political parties and independent candidates to formulate their policy that would gain them public support. The official summary of the election should be delivered from soums, provinces and city districts within five days with the final result being announced within seven days. The official result has not yet been released. Early reports from the GEC suggest voter turnout in the aimags was around 50%, nationwide was 52.9%, and in Ulaanbaatar City was 45.63%.

These local elections have attracted much attention from political parties and independent candidates, possibly due to the new budget law. With the introduction of the new budget law, the amount of discretionary funds to local governments is increasing significantly starting from 2013.

While lower voter turnout is common in local elections worldwide, voters should be further encouraged to participate in deciding who should be responsible for governing and spending local funds in their area.

2.15. Role of UNDP

All people interviewed acknowledged the important role of UNDP and the support through the previous project Representation & Inclusiveness through Electoral system (RITES) from 2010 to 2011 as highly valuable in this crucial period of political reform in Mongolia. For the next phase, the proposed project on Electoral Cycle Support from 2013 to 2016 aims to address some of the findings and recommendation from this lessons learned exercise and consolidate achievements so far, namely in three areas: enhanced technical knowledge on electoral and political reform frameworks in parliament, enhanced inclusion and gender

awareness in parliament, and enhanced ability of citizens to engage in political life.

Regional conferences and study tours - such as UNDP's Community of Practice in Manila in 2011 and a regional workshop on National Action Plan for Political Quality in Elected Office in Bangkok in 2012 - have received positive feedback from participants, inspiring and motivating Mongolian leaders in society to act on reform with concrete steps.

UNDP has to be politically sensitive regarding the type of support it provides especially when it comes to advice on legislation that is inherently political, and needs to avoid the perception of any kind of foreign interference. However some best practice principles can be promoted through various workshops and dialogue forums such as gender equality.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Mongolian democracy has developed rapidly with significant improvements over the past decade and is now a member state of a global democracy institute, attends regional conferences and is considered by barometers such as freedom house as a free democracy.

While these democratic gains are laudable, they need to be consolidated and sustained through further legal reform, strengthening institutions and processes, oversight and checks and balances, more inclusive debate through consultation and deeper civic engagement in politics and voting. A few of the following areas remain a priority to address.

Unifying all related laws into an electoral code which can provide a stable and common understanding for all stakeholders of the rules and procedures.

The tendency of political parties is to resort to vote buying to win votes or when losing allege fraud. A more proactive approach would be to ensure voter turnout does not decline further but increases by addressing barriers in registration at home and abroad and by engaging a growing youth.

Parties should be encouraged to have more women candidates and increase the quota to 30 per cent with better placement on the lists i.e. zebra/zipper. Avoid candidate tax which discriminates the right to be elected. Further, build confidence of more women candidates in campaigning and changing attitudes of voters, the media, male MPs or party members to see that both men and women in politics can make a useful contribution to the development of the state.

Due to the reform measures and innovations, the 2012 elections were considered to be well organized, peaceful and marked a considerable sign of progress in Mongolia's democratic development. Regardless of the success in making the election run more smoothly, according to some reports the electoral reforms failed to build people's trust in political institutions and parties.

4. LESSONS LEARNED

- Adopting too many changes resulted in late legislation, only partially implemented procedures (like distribution of biometric IDs), and leaves little

time for effective civic education and engagement.

- The introduction of a mixed parallel electoral system was intended to increase inclusivity but resulted only in a small increase in representation of female, smaller party and individual candidates.
- Strong party votes have resulted in more women being elected but party fragmentation may cause fewer women to get elected. Likewise, in constituencies, women candidates have a better chance on a multi-member than single member i.e. in a team with a male candidate.
- The candidate tax and fundraising demands pose major barriers to equal opportunity candidacy.
- The political finance law has no provision on appropriate means for raising campaign funds only for spending funds. Weak limits and restrictions mean that rich candidates and parties have a better chance; and no monitoring and enforcement mean that business interests can unduly influence parties and MPs after they are elected.
- The GEC has the mandate and resources through its financial inspection committee to monitor campaign finance, but as it is composed of representatives nominated by parties, they are often reluctant to perform this function.
- Vote buying practice is hard to eradicate especially when unemployment is high and salaries are low despite offers of compensating voters who had been offered; the GEC enforcing sanctions sends a strong message to political parties and may help deter future attempts at vote buying.
- The voter register has improved due to the census in 2010, as it has been linked to the updated civil registry and new ID system.
- A lack of on-going civic education may have contributed to lower voter turnout and general feelings of exclusion.
- The introduction of any technology such as automated counting machines needs the full trust of all stakeholders and needs to eliminate any doubt that may affect the credibility of the process and legitimacy of the result.
- A random sample of manual parallel counting helped build trust in the new system and reduced doubt especially when the discrepancies discovered were few.
- If sanctions are too severe or disproportional to the breach or violation of the law they can prove to be more difficult to enforce.
- Parliamentary seats remaining empty due to on-going disputes undermine the credibility of the election unless resolved in a timely manner.
- Late decisions on including diaspora voters in the election prevented a comprehensive push for voter participation and resulted in low turnout.
- UNDP plays a key role in parliamentary and electoral support but some-

times the low visibility of ‘soft assistance’ is not always acknowledged, such as advice, are not listed as an activity or output to avoid the perception of foreign ideas being imported.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Synergies should be sought with other reform efforts in democratic governance such as anti-corruption measures, administrative and civil service reforms, decentralization policy and broader gender equality goals.
- Long-term support should focus on comprehensive amendments to all laws culminating in a unified and consistent Electoral Code, which would enhance stability and predictability and encourage stakeholders to work more effectively within the legal framework.
- The ruling coalition should not neglect the opposition and other key stakeholders in the reform process. Consultation with all relevant groups would strengthen the process, enhance national ownership, and prevent future conflict.
- Expand the gains women made in the 2012 Parliamentary elections through further electoral reform, such as increasing the number of seats on the proportional element of the system, increasing the quota from 20 to 30 per cent in the political party law, and ensuring a placement on lists where women are alternated with men (such as a zebra listing) to ensure women are placed in positions where they can be elected.
- Build the capacity of the newly elected women parliamentarians and perform gender sensitization of all parliamentarians to ensure that the public’s expectations of new MPs are met and the increased representativeness of parliament is maintained.
- Consider further regulation of media, paying specific attention to the recent trend of an influx of media outlets financed by wealthy candidates to provide disproportionate exposure right before elections.
- Help reduce the cost of campaign expenditures in order to ensure candidacy is accessible to all and consider public funding for parties and candidates with a clear set of criteria.
- Continue voter education campaigns condemning vote buying and valuing one’s vote; encourage political parties to contest fairly by signing codes of conduct publicly denouncing vote buying; enforce sanctions to deter political parties from violating the law.
- Ensure voter registry data, especially addresses, are regularly updated;

educate migrant voters on their rights and procedures for transferring their vote in time.

- Conduct a survey to identify barriers to voter participation both in and out of the country in order to increase turnout in future elections.
- Ensure that aged and disabled voters have access to all polling stations.
- Develop a sustainable training strategy for induction of new election staff or to refresh previous poll workers on the latest amendments; implement performance evaluations of polling stations and staff to identify errors and improve accuracy and efficiency; provide better education to poll workers and political parties on the role of election observers.
- Continue training for the GEC on conflict resolution and prevention and design clear procedures for resolving disputes; the GEC needs to enforce the election law to prove its credibility and independence; clarify the role of GEC in enforcing sanctions for violation of the law.
- Enhance transparency by publishing all electoral data and strengthen the ballot archiving system.
- Facilitate a greater role for CSOs in monitoring non-electoral activities like media, parliamentary legislation, and budgeting.
- Develop a national civic education and participation strategy to revitalize interest of all voters but specifically of youth by including them in dialogue; and support schools in introducing civic rights into the curriculum and practicing democracy through elections in the classroom.
- Nurture in citizens a deeper understanding of the new laws and system and their rights and responsibilities through civic education activities; encourage, through more consultative processes and public hearings, debates on topical issues that affect citizens.
- Continue capacity development of parliament's standing committees, support staff and new MPs through the resource centre and library, conducting specific workshops at key junctures, providing expertise on needs basis, identifying relevant study tours, and assisting with public hearings.

ANNEX 1: LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

This Lessons Learned study was conducted in Mongolia from September 22 to October 3 2012 by an independent consultant in conjunction with a UNDP project formulation mission by UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Programme Specialist and UNDP Global Gender Advisor of BDP-DGG. More than twenty five interviews in person were conducted with a range of stakeholders at national level and in Övörkhangaï aimag and with international organizations.

General Election Commission of Mongolia

1. Mr. Namsrajav Luvsanjav, Chairman
2. Mr. Choinzon Sodnomtseren, Secretary General

Parliament of Mongolia

3. Ms. Oyun Sanjaasuren, MP, Civil Will-Green Party, Chairwoman
4. Ms. Burmaa Radnaa, MP DP, Chair of the Standing Committee on Petition
5. Mr. Agipar Bakei, MP, Chair of the Standing Committee on State Structure
6. Ms. O. Tungalag, advisor, Standing Committee on State Structure
7. Ms. Ts. Oyungerel, MP, Head of Women's Organization, DP
8. Ms. Erdenechimeg Luvsan, MP, Chair of Women's Caucus

President's Office

9. Ms. Ch. Sosormaa, the President's Adviser

Government

10. Mr. Chinbat Baatarjav - Head of Department Information and Technology, General Authority for State Registration (GASR)
11. Ms. Enkhsaikhan Baasankhuu, Head of Secretariat, National Committee on Gender Equality (NCGE)
12. Mr. Gonchigdorj Tugjvandan, Secretary of Öвүрkhangaï aimag Citizen's Representative Hural, former chair of electoral district 10

Political Parties

13. Mr. Sukhbaatar Jamiyankhorloo, MPP Secretary
14. Mr. Sayamaa, Chair MPRP
15. Mr. Ts Khishigsuren, Chair of Aimag Office of DP, Öвүрkhangaï aimag

International Organizations

16. Ms. Meloney Lindberg, Asia Foundation, Country Director
17. Ms. Tirza Theunissan, Asia Foundation, Gender Advisor
18. Mr. Rafael Bejar, International Republican Institute, Programme Director
19. Mr. Urnukh Khuujii, International Republican Institute, Programme Officer

Civil Society

20. Ms. Oyuntuya, Voter Education Centre
21. Mr. Luvsandendev Sumati, SANT MARAL Foundation
22. LEOS Liberal Women's Brain Pool, Цвиркhangai Aimag Branch
23. Ms. Erdenejargal, Executive Director, Open Society Forum

Media

24. Eagle TV

United Nations

25. Ms. Sezin Sinanoglu, UNDP Resident Representative
26. Ms. Argentina Matavel Piccin, UNFPA Resident Representative
27. Ms. Davaadulam Tsegmed, UNDP Governance Team Leader
28. Ms. Barkhas Losolsuren, UNDP Governance Specialist
29. Mr. Gerelt-Od Erdenebileg, National Project Manager, UNDP Electoral Assistance project

