

MONGOLIA HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2016



50
YEARS

Building a Better Tomorrow:
Including Youth in the Development of Mongolia

SUMMARY





The cover of Mongolia Human Development Report 2016, the sixth national Human Development Report of the country, reflects the core message of the report: including youth is essential to the future development of Mongolia. Behind the individuals on the cover, a ger, a traditional Mongolian tent dwelling, mirrors figure 7.1 in the report, which shows that human development–focused youth policy is built upon four thematic pillars. In the cover version, the foundation and walls of the ger are being supported by youth, who represent various groups in Mongolian society. A burst of 17 spectral prism colours shine out from the ger, reminding us of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The background orange is the colour associated with Sustainable Development Goal 9, which highlights the need to build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation for the benefit of human development, which, in our case, refers to the human development of Mongolian youth.

MONGOLIA HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2016

**Building a Better Tomorrow:
Including Youth in the Development of Mongolia**

SUMMARY

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

2016

This report does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Development Programme or the Government of Mongolia. It may be reproduced and circulated for non-profit purposes.

Copyright © 2016

By the United Nations Development Programme in Mongolia

UN House 14201, United Nations Street 14, Sukhbaatar District, Ulaanbaatar City, Mongolia

United Nations Development Programme

email: registry.mn@undp.org

website: <http://www.mn.undp.org/>

PRODUCTION TEAM

Authors of background papers (in alphabetical order)

Davaadulam Tsegmed, Governance Team Leader, UNDP Mongolia

Dustin Barter, Youth Empowerment and Advocacy Officer, United Nations Population Fund

Erdenechimeg Tserendorj, Gender, Disability, LGBT and Gender Consultant

Khishigbuyan Dayan-Ochir, Education Consultant

Lakshmi Boojoo, Director, Economic Policy and Competitiveness Research Centre, Mongolia

Oyumbileg Shagdarsuren, Health Consultant

Report team authors

Saurabh Sinha, Lead Author, former Senior Economist, United Nations Development Programme, Mongolia

Enkhjargal Khorloo, National Author

Gereltuya Altankhuyag, Statistics Expert

Editor

Robert Zimmermann

Ministry of Population Development and Social Protection

Erdene Sodnomzundui, Member of Parliament of Mongolia, Member of the Cabinet, Minister

Narangerel Gochoo, State Secretary, ad interim

Amarsaikhan Duger, Director, Department of Population Development Policy Coordination

Bolormaa Tsoodol, Head, Foreign Affairs Division

Munkhtuvshin Gantulga, Head, Youth Development Division

Myagmarsuren Tsenzee, Officer, Youth Development Division

Enkhsaikhan Bat-Ochir, Officer, Youth Development Division

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Beate Trankmann, United Nations Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative

Sezin Sinanoglu, former United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative

Daniela Gasparikova, Deputy Resident Representative

Thomas Eriksson, former Deputy Resident Representative

Doljinsuren Jambal, Team Leader, Human Development and Millennium Development Goals

Tsetsgee Puntsag, Programme Analyst, Human Development and Millennium Development Goals

Suzanna Sumkhuu, Research Assistant, National Human Development Report

Jargalsaikhan Purevdorj, Communications Officer

Translator

Batzorig Bayar

Infographics

Khangai Ganbaatar, **Hanui Luvsandorj** and **Batbuyan Ganbaatar**

Layout and design

Chinbat Altankhuyag

FOREWORD



Countries throughout the world, but particularly countries in Asia define their development goal as development by the people, development for the people. Their objective is to facilitate the formation of an innovative, creative citizenry with appreciable physical and mental endowments, language skills and competitive capacities by understanding and encouraging the development of the intellectual and physical abilities of adolescents and youth.

Youth represent a significant potential for a nation's future and the major driving force of any country. Investment in youth development is rewarded not only by huge human development outcomes, but also supports social and economic advances that help in the effort to eradicate poverty and reduce unemployment.

Only a few countries in the world have a population in which seven in every ten people are 0–34 years of age. In a country in which youth account for 34.9 percent of the population, there is a need and a necessity to empower youth, invest in youth, increase the participation of youth at all levels of society, engage youth organizations in national initiatives, and improve the quality of the livelihoods and living standards of youth.

It is therefore our responsibility to ensure youth participation and empowerment to create a social order in which youth can make decisions and bear responsibility for their actions, to support a transformation in education quality to foster youth development and lead young people to use their knowledge and education effectively in creating wealth for themselves and the society around them.

This sixth National Human Development Report of Mongolia, “Building a Better Tomorrow: Including Youth in the Development of Mongolia”, is being published at an opportune moment. By focusing on youth, it focuses on the population group that can contribute the most to future national development. By focusing on the challenges faced by youth and identifying the present situation of youth based on wide-ranging research and analysis, it can help guide government interventions in favour of this key population group. This greatly enhances the value of the report.

The First World Youth Policy Forum, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, in 2014, welcomed policymakers and decision makers from all over the world, who, together, recommended that countries formulate comprehensive national youth development policies.

The Ministry has been working on the state policy on youth development since 2015 to fulfil the recommendation. The baseline research, conclusions and recommendations of the sixth National Human Development Report will reside at the core of the process of identifying the evidence-based goals of the state policy document.

The sixth National Human Development Report jointly developed by prominent national experts and researchers and experienced international consultants, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme in Mongolia and open consultation with a wide public once again confirmed the importance and the contribution of human development to Mongolia's progress. It has already become a fundamental document in implementing youth policy and evidence-based decision making on youth.

Let Mongolian youth forever be heavenly and glorious in building strong and prosperous Mongolia and in shaping the world's future.

Erdene Sodnomzundui

Minister of Population Development and
Social Protection

FOREWORD



The UNDP works with countries across the world to prepare human development reports. These are independent intellectual exercises that capture a wealth of empirical data to focus attention on current and emerging policy challenges as they relate to human development. All of them are based on the simple premise enunciated in the first Global Human Development Report that: *“People are the real wealth of a nation.”*

Since the release of Mongolia’s first National Human Development Report in 1997, five reports have been produced and I am delighted to launch the sixth Mongolia Human Development Report on the subject of ‘Building a Better Tomorrow: Including Youth in the Development of Mongolia’.

With young people aged 15–34 years accounting for 34.9 percent of the resident population in 2015 and representing the largest demographic group as well as a significant share of working age people, this is a topic of considerable relevance for Mongolia. Young Mongolians in this age group are the first generation to grow up under democracy, with new ideas and aspirations. They are more global in their outlook and better connected than ever before and are a powerful force for change. The key is to harness and channel that energy to create a sustainable, equitable and more prosperous future for all Mongolians.

The Report analyzes the opportunities and challenges young people face today. Mongolia at national level has made substantial progress on the human development index (HDI) having crossed the high human development threshold for the first time in 2015. However, many young people are being left behind. Youth belonging to vulnerable or marginalized groups face multiple forms of inequality and exclusion. Young people are generally

not sufficiently represented in politics and often excluded from decision-making. The report concludes that the needs and aspirations of young people need more attention and that they need to be involved in identifying and creating solutions to address their specific needs. It also calls on young Mongolians to become dedicated agents of change in Mongolia’s development process.

Involving young people in Mongolia’s development is critical. Young people are and will be key drivers behind the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Development Agenda to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. Ensuring access to quality education, reducing unemployment, encouraging engagement in politics and governance, as well as fostering healthy lifestyles among young people everywhere is crucial to achieving that ambitious agenda.

This report is intended for a broad based audience including Mongolian policy makers at the national, regional and local levels, civil society and academia, international partners, multilateral financial institutions, and the general public and youth in particular. It is hoped that it will contribute to ongoing national efforts to address the challenges faced by young people in Mongolia today. It was prepared by a group of international and national experts, and benefited from extensive stakeholder consultations and technical inputs throughout its preparation. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to everyone who contributed to the preparation of the report.

I look forward to the report generating extensive discussions around youth and human development in Mongolia, as well as the role of different stakeholders in advancing human development for youth. I especially hope that young Mongolians will take ownership of this report, and realize their full potential to become drivers of development and play a major role in the country’s future.

Beate Trankmann

United Nations Resident Coordinator and
United Nations Development Programme
Resident Representative

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRODUCTION TEAM

FOREWORD

FOREWORD

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The NHDR: What is it? What can it do?
Analytical framework and structure of the report
What the NHDR is not
The context of youth in Mongolia
Mongolia's youth: key features
Youth are a large, heterogeneous group
Youth issues are being addressed through national and sectoral policies

CHAPTER 2. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN MONGOLIA

Introduction: measuring human development
The impact of economic growth on progress in human development
HDI component indices
The education index and the relationship with access to knowledge
The life expectancy index and the relationship with health among youth
Adjusting human development measures to show inequality
Measuring gender inequality in human development
Multidimensional poverty
Conclusions

CHAPTER 3. DEVELOPING CAPABILITIES

Introduction: developing youth capabilities
The education of young people
Secondary education
The urban-rural, wealth-poverty, and gender divides
Access among youth with disabilities
Key challenges
Post-secondary and tertiary education
Technical and vocational education and training
Key challenges
Government policy on youth education
Health among youth
Government policy on the health of youth
Conclusions

CHAPTER 4. EXPANDING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Introduction: preparing youth for employment
The transition from school to work

Youth unemployment
Youth employment
The skills of youth and the available employment opportunities
Government policy on youth employment
Conclusions

CHAPTER 5. EMPOWERING YOUTH

Introduction: youth empowerment
The political engagement of youth
Social engagement among youth
Conclusions

CHAPTER 6. ENHANCING HUMAN SECURITY

Introduction: enhancing security for the sake of human development
Youth vulnerability to violence
Protecting vulnerable youth
Conclusions

CHAPTER 7. YOUTH POLICY AND BEYOND

Pillar 1: developing capability
Pillar 2: increasing opportunity
Pillar 3: empowering youth
Pillar 4: enhancing human security
The challenges in developing and implementing a national youth policy

ANNEXES

Annex I The preparation of the sixth NHDR
Annex II Mongolia's previous NHDRs and their impact
Annex III Technical note: methodology update
Annex IV Changes in the methodology for estimating the HDI
Annex V Indicators used in the estimation of the MPI in Mongolia
Annex VI The performance in education
Annex VII The performance in health
Annex VIII Youth unemployment, by location, education and sex
Annex IX Important milestones in a young person's life in Mongolia
Annex X Population profile of Mongolia
Annex XI Mapping youth and violence

Notes

References

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABS	Asian Barometer Survey	NCD	non-communicable disease
GDI	gender development index	NHDR	National Human Development Report
GDP	gross domestic product	NGO	non-governmental organization
GII	gender inequality index	NSO	National Statistical Office of Mongolia
GNI	gross national income	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
HDI	human development index	SISS	Social Indicator Sample Survey
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus	STI	sexually transmitted infection
ICT	information and communication technology	TVET	technical and vocational education and training
IHDI	inequality-adjusted HDI	UN	United Nations
LGBT	lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys	WHO	World Health Organization
MPI	multidimensional poverty index		

Terms specific to Mongolia

aimag	first-level administrative division, equivalent to province; there are 21 aimags
soum	second-level administrative division, equivalent to district; as of 2015, there were 330 soums
ger	Mongolian yurt, or traditional tent dwelling
ger district	tent city, especially around Ulaanbaatar
khural	local representative body
State Great Khural	national parliament of Mongolia

Units

%	percent
₮	togrogs, the Mongolian currency

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This National Human Development Report (NHDR) of Mongolia – the sixth in the series – focuses on youth. Through the medium of the human development approach, it analyses the opportunities, choices and challenges facing young people in Mongolia today. This approach places people at the centre of development. It concentrates on enlarging people’s opportunities and choices to live long, healthy and productive lives.

A key overriding message of this report is the contribution of youth to building a better tomorrow in Mongolia. This contribution depends largely on the capabilities and opportunities open to youth in making choices. Young people are the shapers and leaders of our global future.¹ Like young people elsewhere, Mongolia’s youth possess the potential to become the drivers of change and play a significant role in the nation’s future. They are the first generation in the country to have spent most of their lives under a democratic form of government. This has been crucial to their outlook and their experience.

At more than one million, youth aged 15–34 years represent the largest demographic group in Mongolia, accounting for 34.9 percent of the resident population in 2015 and a significant share of the people of working age. Even by 2040, when the country’s population is expected to reach 4 million, an estimated 29 percent will be in the 15–34 age-group.

The annual growth in gross domestic product (GDP) of Mongolia increased to 6.7 percent in 2005–2010 and then accelerated to 12.2 percent in 2010–2014. However, according to the World Bank, the growth in GDP is projected to have slowed to 2.3 percent in 2015 and to 0.8 percent in 2016 because of a sharp contraction in mining production and despite a gradual recovery in non-mining sectors.² Nearly one person in five is living below the poverty line, and the regional disparities within the country are visible. Nonetheless, Mongolia has made substantial progress in the human development index (HDI) at the national level and is placed in the high human development

category. Over the past two decades, Mongolia has evolved into “a vibrant multiparty democracy with a booming economy”, and it is now “at the threshold of a major transformation driven by the exploitation of its vast mineral resources”.³

To what extent are youth in Mongolia benefiting from the economic growth, the progress in social development and the other opportunities? What challenges are they facing in making the choice to “achieve outcomes that they value and have reason to value”?⁴ What policies are in place to address these challenges? What can be done by stakeholders to include youth in the country’s growth and development? These are some of the questions motivating this NHDR, which analyses the issues around four pillars of human development important to youth: developing capabilities, expanding employment opportunities, empowering youth, and enhancing human security.

Developing the capabilities of youth

Enhancing access to knowledge and education and fostering long and healthy lives among people are two important dimensions of the human development approach.

Youth education

Equipping youth with the ability to think creatively through all levels of education and fostering the proper alignment of education with labour market demands are important markers in preparing youth for productive, fulfilling lives.

Education not only enhances job opportunities, but also helps people realize the significance of other aspects of human development, such as better health, greater empowerment and more active participation in society. Mongolia has achieved appreciable advances in making education accessible to all citizens, especially youth.

The report emphasizes that growing enrolments at all levels of the education system, especially since 2000, have positively supported the progress accomplished in the HDI. According to an estimate of the global Human Development Report (HDR), a child starting school in 2014 can expect to receive 14.6 years of schooling, which is among the better outcomes relative to most countries in the high human development category.

The nine years of compulsory education are now nearly universally attained. As of the 2014/2015 school year, the net enrolment rate had reached 99.1 percent in primary education and 96.1 percent in secondary education. Nearly 80 percent of 15- to 19-year-olds are now attending school, and the urban-rural difference in access has narrowed, though rural areas still lag. The reverse gender gap – the unusual situation of fewer school enrolments among males – is narrowing, too, and the shares of girls and boys up to lower-secondary school are almost equal.

There has also been a sharp expansion in the demand for and access to higher education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) since 2000. According to population census data, the share of young men and women with tertiary degrees increased by a factor of more than three in 2000–2010.

Despite the impressive expansion in enrolments at all levels of education, there are disparities in access. Access to education among youth with disabilities is still limited: only 66.2 percent of youth with disabilities in the compulsory education age-group are enrolled. Almost half the youth with congenital disabilities have no education or are illiterate. These youth face significant barriers because teachers do not have appropriate training, and institutions lack accessible infrastructure. These failures exacerbate the stigma of disability. There are also disparities in access to tertiary education across households of differing wealth status. Likewise, rural students are becoming more disadvantaged in gaining access to higher education because of the rapid rise in the cost of housing and the cost of living in Ulaanbaatar, the capital, where most higher-education institutions are located.

The report also examines the extent to which youth have access to good-quality education that enhances their skills and prepares them for productive and creative livelihoods. It identifies considerable challenges. The low quality of education at all levels is a major concern. It results in low learning achievement, limits the development of capabilities among youth and affects the future employment prospects of youth. Rural secondary-school students face particular difficulties, including lack of access to the Internet and other learning opportunities and shortages in well-qualified teachers and learning resources. As youth progress in the education system towards higher education and TVET, they continue to be confronted by low-quality instruction. Training curricula are outdated, and good textbooks are rare. Academic programmes have little relevance to the requirements of employers, and there is a dearth of practical employment or internship opportunities for graduates. Tertiary education does not equip youth with the skills required on the labour market. This is confirmed by the much higher unemployment rates among young people with TVET and higher educational attainment relative to young people with lower levels of educational attainment.

Recognizing the need to improve the quality of education, the Government has undertaken comprehensive education reform and new initiatives such as changing the structure and years of schooling, upgrading curricula, developing new education standards, strengthening the accreditation system, and enhancing teacher training. There has also been much progress in expanding learning opportunities among youth, including alternative learning opportunities. For example, unprecedented growth and access to information and communication technology (ICT) have provided young people with new means to access knowledge and connect with the rest of the world.

The Government spent 5.3 percent of GDP on education in 2014 and 4.3 percent in 2015. Because of the growth in GDP, real education expenditures were 59 percent greater in 2002–2012. However, it appears public funding is insufficient to finance the reform agenda successfully, particularly programme expansion in the professional development of teachers, the improvement

of laboratories in educational establishments, and the acquisition of new textbooks and other soft items.

The report concludes that, to foster the development of youth capabilities, the problems in equitable access to good-quality education, including the expansion of access among young people with disabilities and youth in low-income families, must be urgently addressed through immediate actions by the Government and other stakeholders.

Youth health

The adoption of healthy lifestyles is crucial to reducing health risks and avoiding preventable disease so that youth may live long and healthy lives.

Good health is critical to the development of young people's capabilities. Health and well-being are not only crucial to the immediate quality of life and productivity of young people, but they also shape the future welfare of the population and society. However, the exposure of youth in Mongolia to situations of risk can undermine future capabilities, limit the opportunities to avoid preventable disease and mortality and restrict the possibility of living healthy and productive lives.

A key concern is the slow growth in life expectancy among youth in the 15–34 age-group. While young women in this group have added two or three years to their lives since 1990, life expectancy among young men has declined across all youth age cohorts. For example, men are four times more susceptible to traffic accidents than women.

The report highlights that the root cause of the slow progress in life expectancy among youth and in adult mortality rates may lie in the high prevalence of situational risk factors such as alcohol and tobacco abuse, unbalanced diets, lack of physical activity, and obesity among adolescents and youth. The analysis indicates that youth in Mongolia consume far fewer fruits and vegetables and exhibit more than twice the salt consumption relative to the internationally recommended daily allowance. The share of youth who are overweight or obese is high. Close to one third of young people smoke. Alcohol use is also substantial.

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are now a major health risk in Mongolia and account for nearly 80 percent of all deaths. Deaths by accidents, injuries, poisoning, or other external causes are responsible for the largest share of the deaths across all youth age cohorts and have been trending upward as causes of death among these age cohorts since 2010. NCDs often become established during adolescence and young age, although most are preventable and treatable. Adolescents and youth have a great potential for practicing healthy lifestyles if there is an appropriate policy and support environment.

The report examines the role of structural factors in the exposure of youth to situations of risk and explores the opportunity to create a supportive environment for the adoption of healthy lifestyles among youth. In Mongolia, it is evident that structural factors such as the low price of tobacco and alcohol, the excessive marketing and advertisement of unhealthy food items, the high price of fruits, the limited access to sports and healthy leisure facilities, and the inadequate implementation of restrictions on alcohol and tobacco use are negatively affecting the adoption of healthy behaviours by young people. The report therefore argues that, despite a tobacco control law and the recent toughening of traffic regulations, the Government must take more forceful policy action to address the structural factors affecting unsafe and unhealthy behaviours among youth.

The analysis indicates that the increase in the adolescent birth rate is affecting the gender inequality index (GII) negatively. The birth rate among adolescents in Mongolia is higher than the average in the Asia and Pacific region. It rose from 19 births per 1,000 women aged 15–19 years in 2003 to 29 in 2013. The unmet need for family planning is highest among this age-group, at 36.4 percent. Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) continue to represent a major public health issue because of widespread, unsafe sexual behaviours. Young people aged 15 to 24 are not the major age-group for reported cases of HIV, comprising only about 20 percent of the cumulative cases. However, they do account for a majority of the reported cases of STIs (ranging between 40 percent and 50 percent annually), which suggests that risk scenarios exist rendering

youth susceptible to HIV. According to a 2015 report, among people living with HIV/AIDS, 41.2 percent are youth under age 30, of which 54 percent are women, and 43 percent are men (among 3 percent, the sex is unknown).⁵ This suggests there is a greater need for youth-friendly health services and good-quality sexual education.

Despite reasonable access to health care among young people, youth demand is low because of a lack of services that fit the needs of this segment of the population. Currently, 25 adolescent health centres deliver youth-friendly services across the country. However, more ought to be done to expand youth-friendly health services.

Health care expenditures rose by 8.8 percent in inflation-adjusted terms up to 2012, but the share of Government health care expenditure in GDP fell from 4.6 percent to 3.0 percent in 2002–2012. Moreover, health sector expenditures alone are insufficient to address the social, environmental and behavioural problems that are negatively affecting the pursuit of healthier lifestyles.

Public health financing should thus be considered more broadly than merely funding the health care sector. The adoption of healthy behaviours by adolescents and youth is socially and economically more effective than dealing with the resulting enduring problems in adulthood. Healthy lifestyles should therefore be fostered, and the risk of accidents and injuries among youth should be reduced through effective policies and health promotion programmes.

Expanding employment opportunities

The creation of new productive, remunerative and satisfying employment opportunities would enable young people to earn livelihoods, become economically secure and unleash their potential and their creativity.

Access to employment represents a critical means of expanding the substantive freedoms that people value. Obtaining work is an important marker of a successful transition from youth to adulthood because, through stable employment and by making economic decisions and being accountable for their lives, young people become finan-

cially independent and acquire the freedom to do what they wish to do.

While searching for their first stable jobs after completing their education, youth must undergo the school-to-work transition. In Mongolia, the majority of youth at ages 15–18 are in secondary school; more than half of all youth in the 25–34 age-group are still looking for stable work, and 40 percent have not undertaken the school-to-work transition.

Relative to young people in rural areas, urban youth begin the transition late (usually at over 21 years of age). This may be because they prefer to attain more education. However, that they must wait up to 2.9 years to obtain their first jobs may also be an indication of the challenges to labour market entry that arise because of a mismatch between the skills these youth possess and the skills desired and expected by employers or because of a shortage of suitable jobs in urban areas.

The share of youth entering the labour market rises among the 25–34 age-group. Among this age-group, more men than women are working even though more women than men graduate with tertiary degrees. This implies that either the demand for labour is greater in sectors that require less skill, or women delay entry into the labour market to pursue family obligations or other unpaid care activity.

The report explores how Mongolia's economic growth enhances the progress in human development, and, more importantly, how it enables young people to acquire sustainable and productive employment and become economically secure. The link between economic growth and the progress in the HDI is evident in Mongolia's recent past. Overall, economic growth has led to impressive gains in human development. Most of the improvement in the HDI since 1990 occurred in 2000–2014 when average annual economic growth was around 7.0 percent.

The recent economic growth has coincided with several positive labour market trends. Nonetheless, it has not translated into sufficient gains in decent and productive employment among the young population. Moreover, the decline in the mining sector

over the last two or three years has severely affected the employment opportunities among youth in the sector and in associated sectors.

The unemployment rate in 2013 was 10.8 percent among the 15–34 age-group. It was highest among the 20–24 age-group, at 17.0 percent, which was more than twice the national average rate. Youth unemployment in aimag (province) and soum (district) administrative centres, at 17.0–19.0 percent, was well above the national average, which means that opportunities for employment among youth in the aimag and soum centres were limited.

Among youth looking for suitable jobs, 63 percent have been looking for more than a year, and 40 percent have been looking for more than three years. This indicates that youth are more vulnerable to long-term unemployment and economic insecurity. In this environment, youth are in danger of experiencing an erosion in skills, a loss in lifetime earnings and greater vulnerability to health and other risks. They may also become discouraged from actively seeking jobs. Low wages, low labour demand, inadequate professional experience, lack of appropriate qualifications, and lack of information about available jobs are among the most common reasons why unemployed youth are unable to find employment.

The report emphasizes that more well educated youth face a higher risk of unemployment, which appears to be a perverse outcome of the higher returns to education. The rates of unemployment among young people with TVET and higher educational attainment are much greater than the rates among young people with lower levels of educational attainment.

The employment elasticity of growth has fallen continuously across many sectors since 2000. The growth of mining and the overall economy, fueled by the increase in commodity prices, has done little to raise employment. This is one of the many challenges in the effort to translate growth into productive employment among youth.

The employment status of youth varies considerably by location. In 2010, about 39.2 percent of urban youth were employed, compared with 22.2 percent among rural youth.

Since 2000, well over 40 percent of the rise in employment has occurred in the service sector, which employs a large share of youth. However, most of these jobs are part time or temporary and do not provide employment security and stability. Similarly, among youth aged 15–34 who are in primary employment, more than 30 percent are employed in the informal sector. Despite the boom in the construction industry in recent years, the share of young construction workers has risen only modestly, from 6 percent to 8 percent. Around 80 percent of persons with disabilities are economically inactive. (There are no specific data on employment among youth with disabilities.)

The report makes a strong case that young women face more difficulties in entering or re-entering the labour market. The unemployment rate is higher among young women than among young men, and it has been rising among young women. The occupational segregation of women is widespread, resulting in a concentration of women in a narrow range of occupations such as education (80.6 percent), health and welfare (79.4 percent), and the social sciences, business and law (64.3 percent). In engineering, manufacturing and construction, only 30.0 percent of graduates are women, indicating that there is a clear underrepresentation of women in science and technology-related fields. Young women earn 1.4 times less than young men. They dominate in unpaid work: in 2011, 17 percent of 25- to 29-year-old women reported they took care of the home, versus only 1 percent of the men in this age-group. The gender gap in the labour market among youth is evident, and this indicates a need for gender-sensitive labour market policies.

The Government has placed job creation at the centre of economic and labour policy and programmes by undertaking to link macroeconomic policymaking and labour market policies, to invest in initiatives to intensify industrial development and manufacturing, to enhance employment promotion programmes among young people, persons with disabilities, migrants and students, and to expand training and retraining among the unemployed. Nonetheless, more effort is required to support sustainable and productive youth employment through much larger and more intensive youth employment promotion programmes.

During the school-to-work transition, young people, particularly fresh graduates in the poorest households, receive no financial support from the Government and must depend only on their parents or siblings. The Government might therefore consider implementing targeted social assistance for one year after graduation to allow youth in poorer households the time to find appropriate jobs.

Work for Human Development, the global HDR launched in Ulaanbaatar on 15 December 2015, proposes broadly innovative policy options for enhancing human development through work. According to the report, “work, not just jobs, contributes to human progress and enhances human development”.⁶ In line with the recommendations of the global report, the NHDR of Mongolia urges the Government and other actors to undertake actions that enhance the employment opportunities available to the country’s youth.

Empowering youth

Policymakers and political leaders should view the trust deficit as a serious reminder that improvements in governance are required to engage with youth on policies that impact youth and to include young people in the development process.

Empowerment is the freedom of people to influence development and the decisions that affect their lives. Youth is a period in which individuals begin to form opinions and exercise choice more effectively, exhibit more dynamism, participate in political activities, support causes, establish groups, become members of social organizations, demand action and take control of their lives. Becoming involved in these endeavours contributes to a sense of empowerment among youth. Though empowerment does not occur automatically, it can be facilitated by political participation and civic engagement.

In Mongolia, there has been a declining trend in voter turnout among youth over the last decade. This implies that the country’s democratic institutions are not advocating sufficiently to respond to the concerns and interests of young people or encouraging their participation in society and that the

voices of youth are not being adequately heard through the political process.

According to the 2010–2012 Asian Barometer Survey (ABS), youth in Mongolia rank freedom and liberty as the most important attributes of democracy. However, a large share of youth – more than 42 percent – seem to favour a non-democratic alternative, such as rule by a strongman or single-party rule.

Although Government institutions enjoy a high level of trust among youth, recent years have seen an erosion in the trust in political institutions. Among the institutions trusted the most by youth are the army, television, the Presidency and the police. Youth who have relatively higher educational attainment or who reside in urban areas are more critical of the Government than their less well educated or rural counterparts. Youth in Mongolia are not disengaged from politics; more than a third regularly follow the political news, though interest in politics is low among teenagers.

An important element of the sense of empowerment is the degree to which youth feel their political participation has an impact on the Government. More than 60 percent of youth in Mongolia consider politics dirty and believe that injustice is driving good people away from politics. More than half of young survey respondents think Government leaders cannot be trusted to do what is right, and they are dissatisfied with the course of politics in the country. The lack of political commitment among youth is in sharp contrast to the situation in 1990, when Mongolia’s democratic revolution was driven largely by young people.

Civic and social engagement is a key component of positive youth development. It empowers young people and allows them to exercise citizenship, develop life skills, network, and enhance their employability and learning outcomes. In Mongolia, youth are also actively involved in social life across many areas through civil society organizations, youth programmes, youth-led initiatives and volunteering individually and collectively. Volunteerism is growing among youth; many young people view volunteerism as a way to bring about positive change in society.

New forms of technology have been instrumental in allowing young people to obtain information, support movements, network and make their voices heard. Use of the Internet has increased rapidly, especially because of wider Internet and mobile network coverage in rural areas, which has opened many opportunities for the young. There were over 2.4 million Internet subscribers in 2015, which represents about 81 percent coverage. Of these, nearly 80 percent were connected via Facebook. This embodies a new opportunity to channel youthful energy and ideas by relying on the new forms of communication and mobilization to reinforce the participation of youth in the political process.

Enhancing human security

Reduced vulnerability to violence and strong family and community support help create a secure social and economic environment so that youth can live long, safe, healthy and creative lives.

During the transition to adulthood, youth in Mongolia are exposed to risks to human security, such as violence, traffic and workplace accidents, alcohol abuse, uneven access to social services and air pollution. These risks undermine the dignity and livelihoods of young people and endanger the acquisition of the freedoms and capabilities that can help youth lead the fruitful lives they may choose. They infringe on the fundamental human right to physical integrity and freedom from fear and impair the ability of youth to participate as responsible citizens in the economic, political and social life of the country.

In Mongolia, the following are the most common serious types of violence to which youth are exposed.

Domestic violence: Domestic violence has a strong gender bias: police records show that 88.1 percent of the victims of domestic violence in 2015 were women, and 57.2 percent were youth aged 14–34 years. All stakeholders should therefore support strong action to combat violence against women and youth.

Bullying: According to the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global School-Based Student Health Survey, more than

30 percent of 13- to 25-year-olds and nearly 20 percent of 16- to 17-year-olds in Mongolia had experienced bullying during the month prior to the survey.⁷ Bullying is often associated with physical aggression among students, resulting in injury. There is a risk that early experiences of bullying either as victim or perpetrator may contribute to or lay the groundwork for later, more excessive involvement in violence.

Crime: Internationally, most crimes are committed by men between the ages of 15 and 30. In Mongolia, a review of the available data reveals that young people in the 18–34 age-group account for half the victims of crime and 75 percent of the individuals sentenced for crimes. Crime rates are higher in urban areas than in rural areas.

Trafficking of people for sexual exploitation: Trafficking for sexual exploitation is the most typical form of trafficking, although trafficking for forced labour, servile marriage, crime-related activities, or other purposes is also relatively frequent. The first human trafficking case in Mongolia was reported in 2000.⁸ Since then, Mongolia has emerged as a transit and a source country. Youth, poorer single women and less well educated young women are most at risk.

Suicide: In 2014, the mortality rate by suicide per 10,000 population was 0.52 among women and 2.67 among men. With an age-specific rate of 14.3 suicides per 100,000 population among 15- to 29-year-old men, Mongolia ranked 69th among 172 countries.

Discrimination against minorities: A National Human Rights Commission report in 2012 found that almost 80 percent of individuals who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) had experienced some form of human rights abuse or discrimination during the previous three years.⁹ The support of their families is often not forthcoming among LGBT youth.

Establishing the precise causality of the high vulnerability of young people to violence compared with other age-groups in Mongolia is difficult because many structural and individual factors contribute to the phenomenon. These include poverty and poor living conditions, significant unemployment, inequality of opportunity, weaknesses in the implementation of laws

to combat violence, dominant notions of masculinity, alcohol abuse, low awareness of human rights, and personality disorders.

The family and community play a crucial role in protecting the young from exposure to violence and in ensuring the personal as well as community security of youth. The state and civil society have undertaken significant efforts to combat violence. Nonetheless, much more needs to be done to promote a safe environment and mitigate the causal impact of socio-economic factors on violence.

Young people are agents of change and can improve their ability to enhance their own security through social engagement, awareness-building, advocacy for better access to social services and greater participation in policymaking and policy implementation.

Youth policy and beyond

An overriding conclusion of this report is that the gains in human development in Mongolia have benefited some, but not all the country's young population. There are still serious challenges in enhancing the capabilities, the range of choices and the opportunities of all young people.

Through the analyses in the report, eight policy priority areas have been identified, two under each of four pillars of human development, as follows:

1. *Developing the capabilities of young people* by reducing inequalities in the access to high-quality education at all levels and by promoting healthy lifestyles
2. *Expanding the opportunities available to young people* by supporting them in acquiring the skills they will need and by creating employment among youth
3. *Empowering youth* by enhancing the political participation of youth and by encouraging the engagement of youth in social activities and civil society
4. *Promoting an environment that is safe and secure for young people* by reducing the vulnerability of youth to violence and by strengthening the ability of families to provide support

The country's policies and interventions in favour of youth have a long history, but youth issues are usually embedded in broader national and sectoral policies. Yet, there is a disconnect between youth-centred policies and programmes and the larger development goals of the country, leading to a gap in the inclusion of youth in the political, economic and social life of the country. Youth programmes have also suffered from a lack of funding and poor coordination across ministries. To improve the impact of youth policies and programmes, the Government therefore needs to focus on the following:

1. *More effective integration within the national planning framework:* to be successful, youth policy should be well integrated into national policy planning, budgeting and implementation mechanisms.
2. *The coordination of youth policy across line ministries:* for effective implementation, youth policy needs to be well coordinated across line ministries and administered jointly because of spillover effects and complementarities across various components.
3. *The need for reliable, comparable data and research on youth issues:* strengthening research, the collection, processing and storage of data disaggregated by age and sex, and undertaking analysis on issues of relevance will greatly advance evidence-based policymaking in favour of youth.
4. *The promotion of the participation and voice of youth:* young people seem to lack voice because they are underrepresented in political decision-making and in addressing the broader development issues important for the future direction of the country. Youth need to have a stronger voice and meaningful participation in establishing the development vision of Mongolia so as to build a better tomorrow.

YOUTH POLICY AND BEYOND

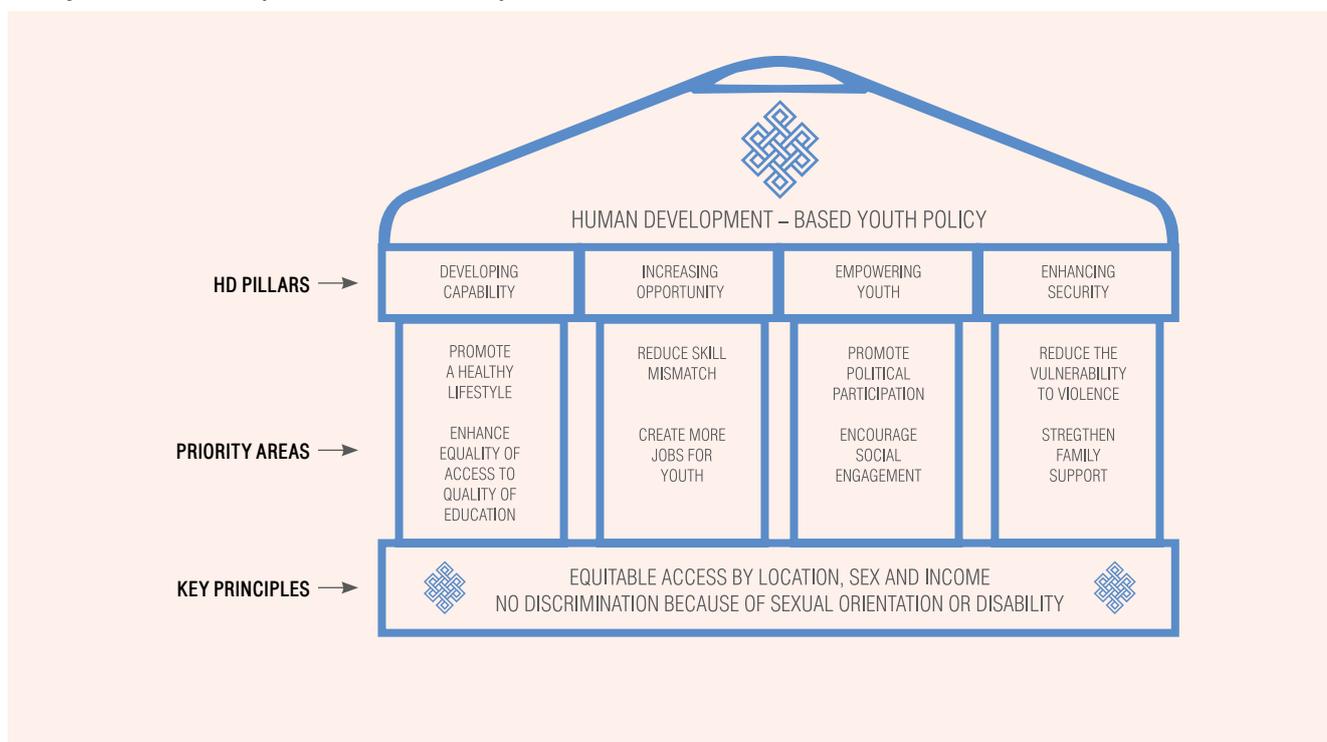
This report reflects a recognition that youth are integral to a country’s development. The chapters all analyse the opportunities and challenges facing young people in Mongolia today to become healthier, well-educated, employed, empowered and responsible citizens. The report relies on the capability approach to human development (chapter 1). According to this approach, how well youth contribute to a country’s development depends largely on their capabilities, the freedom with which they are able to live long, healthy and creative lives, and the opportunities open to them in making choices. Access to knowledge and quality education and the ability to lead a healthy life are key elements of human capability.

An overriding conclusion of this report is that gains in human development have benefited some, but not all of Mongolia’s young population. Many issues examined in this report revolve around the limitations in the inclusion of youth in economic and social development and the challenges in improving capabilities and enhancing the choices and opportunities available to young people.

Drawing upon the analyses in the report, this chapter identifies several priorities in the effort to generate a wider policy debate and address the challenges young people face today. These priorities are grouped according to the four thematic pillars of the analytical framework outlined in chapter 1 and depicted in figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1

Mongolia’s Human Development–Based Youth Policy



Pillar 1: developing capability

Priority area 1: improve the quality of education

Mongolia's success in achieving high levels of enrolment in primary and secondary education after the sharp decline during the 1990s is remarkable. The country is close to achieving near universal access to primary and secondary education. A child who entered school in 2014 can expect to receive 14.6 years of schooling. This is among the best results achieved in high human development countries.

Despite the greater coverage, there are still disparities in access by sex, location of residence and income status. Young rural men exhibit low enrolment rates in secondary education relative to other groups. Among youth with disabilities, only 60 percent in the compulsory education age-group are enrolled in school. The progress in education quality has not matched the progress in expanding coverage. Good-quality education is available mostly in urban areas and is often received by youth in higher-income households.

Secondary-school graduates lack professional guidance in determining their future career options, while the tertiary education system does not equip students with the skills they need for the available labour market. Overall, the poor education outcomes seriously affect the future employment prospects of youth. Today's world is increasingly based on knowledge, with emphasis on skill formation, technological development and innovation. Ensuring inclusive and equitable access to knowledge and good-quality education among youth regardless of location, sex, or income status is therefore crucial for Mongolia's future.

Action points

To develop the capabilities of youth and prepare young people for the future, the Government should undertake the following:

- Ensure that secondary education equips youth with the ability to think critically and creatively.
 - See that curricula, teaching methodologies and textbooks meet international standards; ensure the implementation of stable national education standards.
 - Provide upgraded infrastructure.
 - Encourage young people to take advantage of the rapid expansion in access to ICTs; promote universal access to better language and information technology skills through education to enable youth to rely on social media and the Internet as learning resources.
 - Guarantee the availability of career counselling to the graduating class in each secondary school.
- Foster the proper alignment of tertiary education with the broader development context.
 - Ensure an adequate number of high-quality tertiary institutions with significant teaching capacity and an enhanced learning environment.
 - Foster academic education that instils suitable skills to enable young people to accumulate work experience and meet the changing demands of the labour market.
 - Facilitate access to higher education among disabled youth.

Priority area 2: promote healthy lifestyles

Life expectancy at birth has risen over the years. However, since 1990, youth in the 15–24 age-group have added only one year to their lives, and there has been no change in life expectancy among the 25–34 age-group. Life expectancy among young 15- to 34-year-old men declined in 1990–2010.

Mortality rates among youth have been trending upward across all age-groups and all disease categories since 2010. A disaggregation by sex shows that young men are at two or three times greater risk of mortality than young women across all age-groups. Accidents, injuries, poisoning and other external causes are the largest cause of mortality among youth.

Widespread situations of risk such as unhealthy diet, lack of physical activity, tobacco consumption, alcohol use, unprotected sex, and traffic accidents can undermine the ability of youth to avoid preventable disease and can contribute to the high incidence of NCDs in the later stages of their lives, as well as to more immediate harmful outcomes such as STIs, unwanted pregnancies, abortions and accidental deaths.

Action points

All stakeholders can promote healthy lifestyles among youth. The Government and other actors should undertake the following:

Policy related

- Ensure stricter enforcement of tobacco and alcohol laws and regulations.
- Adapt and implement a national strategy for adolescent and youth health and development to mainstream youth-friendly and rights-based service provision that maintains confidentiality.
- Guarantee that health policies reflect a special attention to sexual and reproductive health and the rights of young people, particularly by improving access to high-quality family planning and STI prevention services.

- Develop suitable policies and national standards to promote healthy foods and better nutritional habits, including reducing the consumption of salt, carbonated beverages and trans-unsaturated fatty acids.

Tax related

- Increase the taxes on tobacco and alcohol and use the generated revenue to fund investment in youth development and health promotion.
- Offer tax incentives to entrepreneurs to establish sporting clubs, fitness centres and other leisure facilities for young people.

Service provision

- Scale up adolescent- and youth-friendly services, including sexual and reproductive health services, to increase their uptake and widespread use. Adolescent health centres should be adapted and reorganized to fit the needs of young people.

Awareness campaigns, sporting events

- Partner with the private sector, civil society organizations and youth organizations to launch national awareness campaigns to highlight the negative health effects of tobacco and alcohol use and to promote healthy lifestyles.
- Expand and improve life skills-based education in schools and make physical education compulsory up to secondary school.
- Mobilize private sector sponsorship to promote competitive sports.
- Create an enabling environment for civil society organizations to provide services.

Schools, communities and civil society organizations can do the following:

- Utilize innovative social marketing methods and effective behaviour change communication programmes relying on social media to reach most-at-risk and hard-to-reach adolescents

and youth, particularly young men, to create awareness about healthy lifestyles.

- Through education institutions at all levels, introduce good-quality life skills–based health education curricula and promote healthy lifestyles among students.

Families should do the following:

- Promote healthy eating habits at home with emphasis on fruits and vegetables.
- Make the home a smoke-free environment and avoid smoking at home because of the harmful effects of passive smoking.
- Parents and older siblings should aim to become role models for younger children and adopt healthy habits.

- Eliminate or at least reduce alcohol consumption during celebrations such as on birthdays, during Lunar New Year, at weddings, and so on.
- Create opportunities and an open atmosphere at home for discussions about lifestyle issues, including sex education.

Acknowledging their agency, young people can do the following:

- Cut tobacco use and excessive alcohol consumption.
- Adopt diversified dietary habits.
- Participate in life skills training courses.
- Increase participation in physical activities, such as sports, cycling, or walking to school or work and joining fitness clubs.

Pillar 2: increasing opportunity

Skill enhancement and greater access to employment are central goals of efforts to increase the opportunities available to young people to lead the lives they wish to lead.

Priority area 3: reduce the skill mismatch

Priority area 4: create more jobs for youth

The main barriers faced by young people in obtaining decent, productive employment are the mismatch between supply and demand on the labour market, the skill mismatch between education and the labour market, the inadequate quality of labour, the lack of employment opportunities, especially in rural areas, and the lack of career development services.

Despite strong economic growth performance in recent years, Mongolia has been confronted by the serious challenge of translating growth into employment, particularly among the large youth population. The unemployment rate among the 20–24 age-group is, at 17 percent, twice the national unemployment rate. Among young men

and women seeking work, the majority have been looking for a year or more.

Youth in poorer households are at a greater disadvantage during the school-to-work transition. Because of the urgency to start earning income quickly, many young people in the lower wealth quintiles are pushed to take the first available employment and end up in dead-end or mismatched jobs.

Women outnumber men at all levels of higher-education degree programmes; yet, their educational achievements do not translate into greater workforce participation or better employment opportunities. Many young women who start families before finding work stay out of the labour market or remain unemployed for a long time because re-entry into the labour market is often difficult.

About 80 percent of persons with disabilities, including youth, are economically inactive. Those who are active are more likely to be self-employed, suggesting that barriers exist to the economic activity of people with disabilities.

Action points

Investment in skills to boost the employability of youth is critical for the transformation of Mongolia from a natural resource-based economy to a knowledge-based economy. To enhance the employment opportunities among youth and promote human development through sustainable work, the Government should adopt the following measures:

Policy related

- Establish a national youth employment strategy to address the changing world of work, respond more effectively to specific challenges facing young people in Mongolia today and promote broader options for the expansion of productive, remunerative and exciting work opportunities for youth that can enhance human development.
- Mainstream youth employment issues into a supportive macroeconomic framework to create more jobs for young people, including well-educated youth, and to promote youth employment in the mining and associated sectors to benefit from sustainable, high-wage employment.
- Encourage social entrepreneurship to create more jobs, while advancing social development.
- Benefit from the experience of other countries that have mainstreamed youth employment policies into national development strategies with the support of international development partners.
- Review the impact of the TVET promotion policy to determine the reasons for the lower enrolments in recent years despite the increase in the associated student benefit even as the demand for skilled workers remains unmet; adjust policies if necessary.

Training and skill upgrading

- Scale up existing employment promotion and training programmes for

young people to develop work-related skills, particularly in rural areas.

- Introduce and promote programmes targeted on youth such as career counselling, assistance with job-seeking and opportunities to gain work experience, including unpaid and paid internships and volunteering.

Economic diversification

- Modernize traditional animal husbandry and agriculture with the help of modern technology, invest in veterinary services, and encourage the establishment of greenhouses and agroprocessing industries to promote youth involvement in the agricultural sector.
- Invest directly in knowledge-based and future technology sectors such as nanotechnology and biotechnology to overcome the constraints of Mongolia's status as a landlocked country and utilize young people's potential and intellectual capability productively.

Youth entrepreneurship

- Support the nurturing of entrepreneurial skills through training programmes carried out in partnership with the private sector and expand the access of young entrepreneurs to sustainable financial services.

Links between industry and tertiary education

- Establish closer links among industries, employers and higher-education and TVET institutions to address the skill mismatch and to respond effectively to labour market demand.
- Promote the funding by industry of scholarships for bright students, especially in underrepresented fields such as mining engineering.
- Locate business incubators and tertiary-education facilities in industrial hubs and industrial parks supported by advanced ICT infrastructure.

Improve the access of youth with disabilities and young women to the labour market

- Develop suitable policies and provide tax benefits to private sector firms that remove the barriers to the re-entry of women in the labour market by expanding child-care centres.
- Provide suitable incentives to encourage private sector firms to hire young people with disabilities and to make infrastructure accessible (such as ramps); enhance the capabilities of youth with disabilities and boost their access to higher education and appropriate technologies.
- Address imbalances in unpaid and paid work benefits. Action is needed along four policy axes: (a) reducing and sharing the load of unpaid care work; (b) expanding the opportunities for young women in paid work by changing relevant norms and improving outcomes through suitable policies and interventions, including the expansion of child-care centres and enhancing access to good-quality public services in ger districts; (c) implement policies to promote a better balance between work and life, including mandatory paid parental leave; and (d) foster a shift in attitudes about gender roles and responsibilities.
- Ensure better access to good-quality higher education among women in those fields where women are underrepresented and encourage the engagement of men in traditionally woman-dominated professions.

Pillar 3: empowering youth

Participation in political activities and engagement in social and community affairs foster youth empowerment.

Priority area 5: promote political participation

Priority area 6: encourage social engagement

The conduct of politicians and political parties in recent years has eroded the trust of young people in political institutions. More than one third of the young people surveyed attributed their lack of interest in politics to their lack of trust in politicians. Urban youth and youth living in poorer households tend to have less confidence in political institutions. Youth have a poor perception of the quality of governance, and they are passive in engaging directly with their elected representatives because they feel such contacts are ineffective and only symbolic. Only 15 percent of young people are involved in lobbying or political activism to solve local problems.

Nonetheless, although youth may seem disillusioned, they are not politically indifferent or disinterested. Mongolians are gen-

erally proud of their fledgling democracy. Youth make up more than 45 percent of the voting population and participate actively; around 45 percent have participated in elections. They desire a responsive government and concrete results based on legitimate expectations and commitments.

Moreover, youth are actively engaged in social activities, including through civil society organizations and volunteerism. The Internet has rapidly emerged as a key medium for mobilizing participation, sharing information and building social networks among youth. The engagement of young people in social activities demonstrates that they have a lot of energy and idealism. Often, the young are looking for opportunities, support and guidance to engage positively and effectively in the development of their communities.

Action points

Policymakers and political leaders should view the trust deficit as a serious reminder that improvements in governance are required to engage with youth on policies that impact youth and to include young people in the development process. To ensure the

wider inclusion and political participation of youth, accomplishing the following is vital:

- Improve the education on democracy among young people as part of the curriculum reform in civics education.
- Implement a voter education programme aimed at first-time voters and eligible voters who do not participate in elections.
- Improve national and local volunteer infrastructure so that it can be instru-

mental in promoting civic and social engagement among youth through relevant policies and programmes.

- Create formal and non-formal education mechanisms to encourage youth participation in activities that can enhance their life skills, leadership and citizenship.
- Increase the number of longitudinal studies on the aspirations and value orientations of young people.

Pillar 4: enhancing human security

Reduced vulnerability to violence and strong family support help create a secure environment so that young people are able to live long, safe, healthy and creative lives.

Priority area 7: reduce the vulnerability to violence

Priority area 8: strengthen family and community support

Young people are exposed to various situations of risk such as domestic violence, bullying, crime, attempted suicide, human trafficking, and hate crimes. These situations of risk threaten the security of young people in school, at work, in public places, and at home. The vulnerability of youth to violence adversely affects the potential for enhancing human development.

The family plays a crucial role in protecting the young against exposure to violence whether as victims or as perpetrators. It is also the main source of financial support among youth during the transition to adulthood and the period between the completion of formal education and the first stable employment. During this time, young people receive no financial support from the Government and must depend only on parents, older siblings, or others.

However, families do not always furnish support to their children among the youth age cohorts. Moreover, the structure of the family is undergoing rapid changes because

of internal and external migration. The rise in the incidence of single-parent households and in divorce rates may affect the ability of families to provide a secure environment for young people.

Action points

All stakeholders can promote a secure environment among youth. The Government and other actors can adopt the following measures to reduce youth vulnerability to violence:

- Strengthen the legal framework and the implementation of appropriate laws and regulations.
- Ensure universal access to infrastructure services.
- Set up youth development centres and youth clubs in aimag and soum administrative centres to expand the social engagement and productive use of leisure by young people.
- Create incentives to curb the excessive consumption of alcohol.
- Undertake research and the collection of reliable data to foster effective analysis of the issues and better policymaking.
- Introduce a targeted social assistance benefit to support youth from poorer households during the school-to-work transition. The benefit could be available for one year after the completion of formal education and administered as a

direct transfer to the young people or as a tax rebate for families below a certain income threshold.

Communities and civil society should do the following:

- Provide opportunities for increased social engagement by youth.
- Foster greater awareness and promote changes in attitudes.
- Undertake training to build awareness of youth issues, especially among law enforcement agencies.

Families should do the following:

- Provide strong support and an enabling environment for youth by seeking a better understanding of youth issues and aspirations.

Youth can do the following:

- Build awareness through, for example, Facebook groups, become socially engaged, and participate in sports and other activities to develop their capabilities and enhance their security.

The challenges in developing and implementing a national youth policy

Governments are recognizing the importance of dealing with young people's concerns and needs by passing targeted youth legislation and adopting relevant policies. Among 198 countries, 122 have national youth policies, a 50 percent rise since 2013. Mongolia is keen to develop a comprehensive youth development policy. Hopefully, this NHDR will encourage rigorous research and analysis, raise awareness of the issues, focus attention on the challenges facing youth, and foster policy discussions, thereby contributing to the design of the national youth policy. The following are some of the priorities in the drafting and implementation of a national youth policy.

Integration with the national development agenda and planning framework

A youth policy is more likely to be successful if it is well integrated into national policy, planning, budgeting and implementation mechanisms. In Mongolia, youth issues are being addressed through general and sectoral policies. However, youth development issues are not adequately reflected in the national policy and planning framework. Integration with the budget process is also weak.

Youth issues should become more well integrated into Mongolia's SDGs. Work is currently under way to identify the country-specific targets. All SDGs are linked with youth issues, but especially the following SDG goals have the most direct impli-

cations for developing youth capabilities, increasing opportunities, empowering youth and enhancing their security: 3 (ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages), 4 (ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all), 5 (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all), and 16 (promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels).

The Government has designed the Sustainable Development Vision–2030 of Mongolia, which was adopted by the State Great Khural in early 2016. Discussions on youth issues during the preparation of the NHDR, along with issues and solutions identified by young people through the global United Nations survey, “The World We Want”, have provided a unique opportunity so the Sustainable Development Vision–2030 of Mongolia reflects the priorities of youth.¹⁰

Coordination on youth policy across line ministries

A youth policy must be well coordinated across line ministries. Youth issues cut across sectors, and most policies that influence the resolution of the issues are implemented by separate line ministries. Thus, the

success of a national youth policy depends upon effective coordination across sectors and line ministries. For this reason and because of the spillover effects and complementarities across various components, the implementation of the youth policy may be more effective if it is administered jointly by the ministries.¹¹

Spillover effects occur if interventions in one area have an impact in another. For instance, cutting alcohol abuse by young people not only improves the health status of the individuals, but also reduces crime and traffic accidents.

Complementarities come into play, for example, if a reduction in health risks becomes associated with skills training so that young people are able to obtain and retain jobs or if young people who are not vulnerable to domestic violence and come from a supportive family environment are shown to enjoy a greater likelihood of acquiring the skills necessary to find suitable jobs.

At the same time, no single youth policy can cover all aspects of the issues and concerns of such a large group. The Government might therefore consider devising several strategies or secondary policies to address the various subgroups within the large youth classification more effectively.

The need for research and reliable and comparable data on youth issues

The dearth of reliable and comparable data on youth in Mongolia is emphasized throughout this report. An important challenge in acquiring reliable data arises because of the lack of unanimity in the country on the age-classification of youth. It is hoped that this issue will be settled through a national dialogue.

There are also huge gaps in the research on various issues related to youth, especially sociological research. While quantitative data on many issues are available from the NSO, in-depth analytical research is lacking or weak.

Some current topics that may benefit from such research are the changes in family

structure and family relationships as a result of migration; the impact of the growth of social media on the formation of new alliances and communities among youth; youth poverty; the impact on youth of the living conditions in the ger districts, and so on.

Strengthening research and analysis on issues of relevance will greatly advance evidence-based policymaking in favour of youth in Mongolia.

The inclusion of youth

Young people in Mongolia seem to lack voice. They are typically underrepresented in political decision-making. Since 2008, there has been only a single member in the State Great Khural under the age of 35. Indeed, youth are more poorly represented than women: there are 11 woman members among the current State Great Khural total of 76.¹²

This means that youth are a weak constituency for reform. Some of the poor representation may have to do with young people's lack of trust in political institutions and their feelings of futility and frustration in political participation. However, the lack of political participation seems to be offset by the active social engagement of youth. While encouraging and welcome, social engagement cannot replace political participation, and young people's disengagement from the political process is a cause for concern.

Young people need to be encouraged to participate more fully in public life. Governmental organizations and other agents need to learn to communicate with youth more effectively, make programmes attractive to them and tap their immense talents as partners in service delivery. By doing this, these actors will be able to harness the ideas, enthusiasm and creativity of youth, while supporting youth in developing their potential freely and thereby make the development process more inclusive.

Policymakers need to include youth in the development process not only on youth policy issues, but also on broader issues influ-

encing the direction of the country. Young people need to be given a stronger voice in setting the development vision and building a better tomorrow together.

This report is about Mongolia's youth. It documents and analyses their challenges, their struggles and their frustrations, but also their hopes, their aspirations and their achievements as they carve out a better future for themselves and shape the future of Mongolia in a rapidly changing world.

Through rigorous analyses and objective use of evidence, this NHDR draws particular conclusions, focuses attention on certain issues and raises pertinent questions. If the issues raised in this report are debated and

addressed by policymakers and others, including, most importantly, young people, this would be the biggest contribution of the report to the development of youth in Mongolia.

The time to focus on youth is now. Tomorrow's youth have already been born. Inclusive and sustainable economic growth, equitable and good-quality education, healthy lifestyles and well-being, sustainable, productive and decent work opportunities, empowerment, and safer and secure conditions for young people are critical to building a better tomorrow.

Notes

Executive Summary

- 1 UNFPA, 2014a.
- 2 World Bank, 2015.
- 3 The quotation and other information in this paragraph are taken from “Overview”, World Bank, Washington, DC, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/mongolia/overview> (accessed 16 November 2015).
- 4 Sen, 1999, p. 291.
- 5 NCCD, 2015.
- 6 UNDP, 2015a, p. 3.
- 7 WHO and NCPH, 2013.
- 8 NHRCM and CHRD, 2002.
- 9 NHRCM, 2012.

Youth policy and beyond

- 10 See “Have Your Say” (database), My World 2015, United Nations, New York, <http://data.myworld2015.org/?country=Mongolia>.
- 11 Spillovers and complementarities are mentioned in World Bank (2007), but in a different context.
- 12 NSO, 2014a.

References

- NCCD (National Centre for Communicable Diseases, Ministry of Health). 2015.** “Surveillance Report”. Global AIDS Response Report, Ulaanbaatar.
- NHRCM (National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia). 2012.** “11th Report on Human Rights and Freedoms in Mongolia”. Ulaanbaatar.
- NHRCM (National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia) and CHRD (Centre for Human Rights and Development). 2002.** “The Crime of Trafficking of Women and Children in Mongolia: The Current Situation”. November, Ulaanbaatar. http://www.childtrafficking.com/Docs/nhrcm_2002_mongolia_trafficking_report_3.pdf. Accessed 22 December 2015.
- NSO (National Statistical Office of Mongolia). 2014a.** Mongolian Statistical Yearbook, 2013. Ulaanbaatar.
- Sen, Amartya. 1999.** *Development as Freedom*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund). 2014a.** *The State of World Population 2014; The Power of 1.8 Billion: Adolescents, Youth and the Transformation of the Future*. New York.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2015a.** *Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development*. New York. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2015-work-human-development>.
- WHO (World Health Organization) and NCPH (National Centre for Public Health). 2013.** “Global School-Based Student Health Survey: Mongolia, 2013 Fact Sheet”. WHO, Geneva; NCPH, Ulaanbaatar. <http://www.who.int/chp/gshs/mongolia/en/>.
- World Bank. 2015.** “Mongolia Economic Update”. Report 101064 (November), World Bank, Washington, DC. http://www.wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2015/11/19/090224b0831edad4/1_0/Rendered/DF/Mongolia000Economic0update.pdf.

Mongolia: Main economic indicators

Activities	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
GDP (at 2010 prices, billion togrogs)	–	–	9 756.6	11 443.6	12 853.4	14 350.7	15 482.3	15 837.7*
GDP (at current prices, billion togrogs)	1 224.1	3 041.4	9 756.6	13 173.8	16 688.4	19 174.2	22 227.0	23 166.8*
GDP, by sector (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Agriculture	27.4	19.8	11.7	10.3	11.2	13.4	13.3	13.6*
Industry	22.2	32.5	33.2	31.3	30.8	30.5	31.5	31.4*
Services	50.4	47.7	55.1	58.4	58	56.1	55.2	55.0*
GDP growth rate (%)	1.1	7.3	6.4	17.3	12.3	11.6	7.9	2.3*
Composition of GDP, by expenditure approach (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Final consumption	85.7	67.3	67.9	63.7	66.5	69.3	69.6	70.8*
Gross investments	27.5	37.5	42.1	58.2	55.9	53.3	35.2	26.3*
Net export	–13.2	–4.8	–10	–21.9	–22.4	–22.6	–4.8	2.9*
Budget revenue (billion togrogs)	351.1	837.9	3 122.5	4 468.2	4 957.8	5 986.9	6 316.5	5 976.1*
Budget expenditure (billion togrogs)	429.7	764.6	3 080.7	4 997.0	5 993.8	6 164.7	7 144.6	7 136.9*
Overall budget deficit (billion togrogs)	–78.6	73.3	41.8	–528.8	–1 036.0	–177.8	–828.1	–1 160.8*
Government revenue as of % of GDP	28.7	27.5	32	33.9	29.1	31.2	28.4	25.8*
Government expenditure as of % of GDP	35.1	25.1	31.6	37.9	35.9	32.1	32.1	30.8*
Health	3.8	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.9	2.5*
Education	6.7	5.1	5.1	4.8	5.6	8.7	8.9	4.3*
Overall budget deficit, as of % of GDP	–6.4	2.4	0.4	–4	–6.8	–1.1	–3.7	–5.0*
Broad money (M2), billion togrogs, end of the year	258.4	1 140.1	4 680.0	6 412.2	7 613.7	9 454.9	10 635.8	10 050.2*
Total loan outstanding (million togrogs)	66 756.7	859 851.8	3 264 778.0	5 641 233.7	6 988 365.1	10 764 170.3	12 502 525.7	11 695 763.6*
Growth of total loan outstanding (%)	–13.9	41.7	23	72.8	23.9	54.0	16.1	–6.5*
Total loans issued outstanding from outside of Ulaanbaatar	–	177 959.1	675 044.9	1 223 622.3	1 540 899.5	2 301 719.2	2 765 674.7	2569925*
Share of non-Ulaanbatar loans in total		20.7	20.7	21.7	22.0	21.4	22.1	22.0*
Consumer price index (%), 2010. XII=100	39.9	55.6	100	108.9	124.2	139.7**	154.3	157.2
Exports (US\$, millions)	535.8	1 064.9	2 908.5	4 817.5	4 384.7	4 269.1	5 774.3	4 669.3*
Imports (US\$, millions)	614.5	1 184.3	3 200.1	6 598.4	6 738.4	6 357.8	5 236.7	3 797.5*
Trade balance (US\$, millions)	–78.7	–119.4	–291.6	–1 780.9	–2 353.7	–2 088.7	537.6	872.3*

*–Preliminary results

**– Updated by meat weight, sold in the market (for meat price index, the meat sales volume /weight/ by outlet were used)

Source: Mongolian Statistical Yearbook, Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, NRSO, Ulaanbaatar.

MONGOLIA HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS 1997–2016

1997 Human Development

2000 Reorienting the State

2003 Urban–Rural Disparities

2007 Employment and Poverty

2011 From Vulnerability to Sustainability: Environment and Human Development

2016 Building a Better Tomorrow: Including Youth in the Development of Mongolia