

THE FREE FLOW OF KNOWLEDGE AND A SPACE FOR A PARTNERSHIP IN MONGOLIA

Technology-driven globalization gives us unprecedented opportunities; individuals, nations and regions are closely linked through the free trade and commerce, through the common sense of values like to protect natural and cultural heritages of humanity, global human rights standards. But opportunities are not limited only in these fields. Information and communication technologies provide increased access to information which is one of the crucial components of participatory democracy. However, open and free access to information is not an end in itself. For example, issues of life and death require a consensus with whole society, when people should decide either they wish to accept Harvard Criteria for Brain Death or not. Therefore, provision of information should be full, adequate and sufficient, but the most important is that information should be turned into the knowledge. With knowledge based society open public debate could be ensured.

Knowledge, we do not really know how much we have discovered and what remains. But we really do understand and recognize that core, home-grown knowledge of science and technology, their application is basement for sustained social and economic development. However, new technologies, methods and discoveries require sophisticated equipment and methods. Such sophistication is too expensive for many societies, including Mongolia, therefore for those who are under the risk of being left out of the knowledge society, only alternative unfortunately is *to catch the knowledge* instead *to create the knowledge*. On the other hand, cultural and linguistic diversity might threaten from the hegemony of integration, inclusion or incorporation. In this situation, our *joint* contribution to the advancement, transfer and universal sharing of knowledge has never been more relevant. And only through the *partnership, co-operation and solidarity by all stakeholders* we can realize internationally-agreed development goals.

Hence the topic of today's session is "Overcoming Barriers and Enhancing Partnership" I would say that **information sharing** is the most important element to achieve a sustainability of the partnership. It will give a picture of one's nature of work, areas of coverage. Therefore, allow me to say about objectives of UNESCO in the field of information, communication technologies. Let this little remind will benefit UNESCO's communication and information programme's from your collaboration and from your contributions as well. The Organization's mission is to promote the free flow of information, knowledge and data, to encourage the creation of diversified contents and to facilitate equitable access to information and to means of sharing knowledge. And taking into account the priorities of international agenda relating to UNESCO's specific mandate among UN system organization, following strategic objectives are identified:

- To promote the free flow of ideas and universal access to information;
- Promoting the expression of pluralism and cultural diversity in the media and world information networks;
- Access for all to information and communication technologies, especially in the public domain.

In support to this mission UNESCO has been implementing two intergovernmental programmes. The International Program for the Development of Communication (IPDC) since 1980, that has assisted developing countries to enhance their communication capacities and to improve their professional training in order to reduce the gap between countries in the communication field. In January 2001, the new intergovernmental programme “Information for All Program” (IFAP) is established, as a platform for reflection and action to help to reduce the digital divide, and will be another key instrument for this purpose. It is expected to provide a frame of reference and to help define the main lines of action in this field.

UNESCO has collaboration with a wide range of partners, including United Nations Agencies, bilateral development partners, international, regional, non governmental and intergovernmental organizations, professional communities. And an active partner in international initiatives such as the United Nations ICT Task Force (Geneva 2003, Tunis 2005), the DOT Force process and the Global Knowledge Partnership. The key partners of UNESCO within its Member States are National Commissions for UNESCO.

Beside the information sharing, I would outline following points in support to overcome the barriers and to enhance multistakeholders partnership.

Legal statue and structure: as constitutionally recognized liaison bodies between UNESCO and the Government of Mongolia, we are helping to identify the points of convergence between national priorities and the multilateral agenda of the Organization, and to sue this optimal effect. We are assisting in the coordination of involvement in UNESCO programs through the government and non-government sectors. The Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO was established in 1963, a year after Mongolia’s Membership to UNESCO. The Commission is composed of 19 members, a representation of various *national authorities* (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Ministry of Nature and Environment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia) *academic, scientific and artistic communities* (Mongolian Academy of Sciences, International Institute of Nomadic Civilization, International Association of Mongolists’) as well as *non-governmental organizations* (The Press Institute of Mongolia, The Youth Federation, National Radio and Television). In execution of UNESCO Porgrammes and activities, National Committees for the World Heritage, National Committee for the International Hydrological Programme, National Committee for the Man and Biosphere Programme, Committee for the Memory of the World were established under the Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO.

This working mechanism and structure with representation of miltu-sectoral involvement, relatively independent status (Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO directly reports to the Minister of Education, Culture and Science) is appropriate to carry out our work effectively and prerequisite environment toward sustainability of our relation with key partners. It helps us to achieve the balance among competing sectors; education, culture, science, communication and information.

More regular dialogue through annual meetings, field trips and missions: as the result of UNESCO’s decentralization policy, cluster offices are empowering in terms of human and financial sources. Expert mission from the cluster office to the Member States is intensifying, needs of individual country and their community’s takes in place through the regular dialogue. For example, UNESCO Cluster Office in Beijing has been

organizing a series of annual consultative meetings with National Commissions for UNESCO among East Asian countries so to ensure specific priorities of this sub-region in UNESCO's strategy, programme and budget.

Raise public awareness, including the dissemination of information, materials and documentation. Effort of international communities towards implementation of development goals and agenda does not find appropriate understanding and support from the local communities. Therefore, continual attention to raise awareness is important toward overcoming barriers among different institutions and will help to establish a partnership. By the support of UNESCO Office in Beijing, number of UNESCO's standard setting instruments was translated into the Mongolian language and broadly distributed. We do have a good collaboration with UN Depository Library in Mongolia, which helps us to spread out UNESCO publications to the public.

Several provisions of the WSIS Plan of Action refers to policy makers, thus special attention should be given to raise awareness among legislator as they do have an immediate influence on the framing of national laws, policies and budgets. And they have another important strength of legislators is that they act as intermediaries between civil society and governance structure. Thus, Policy Guidelines for the Development and promotion of public domain information (from UNESCO), Economic Constraints to the Effective Use of Telecommunications in Education, Science, Culture and in the Circulation of Information (jointly prepared by UNESCO and ITU), WSIS Plan of Action and other documents of major preparatory conferences should be disseminated broadly and available in other languages.

Inter-disciplinary and inter-sectoral approaches: it could help to find new solution and link with new partner. A project proposal entitled "Multi lingual community media and cultural diversity in Mongolia" was designed through the lens of human rights (right to know, access to information), culture (safeguard multi-lingualism and cultural diversity) and traditional knowledge (way to keep reindeers). Broad vision and multi-disciplinary approach ended-up by involvement, support and contribution of following organizations: "The Spark of Spirit" an NGO in the field of culture, "Mongolian Reindeer Fund", Press Institute and Mongolian National Commission for Human Rights who are expressed their interest in this project activity.

Box 2.2

Ethnic diversity does not contribute to disparities in access

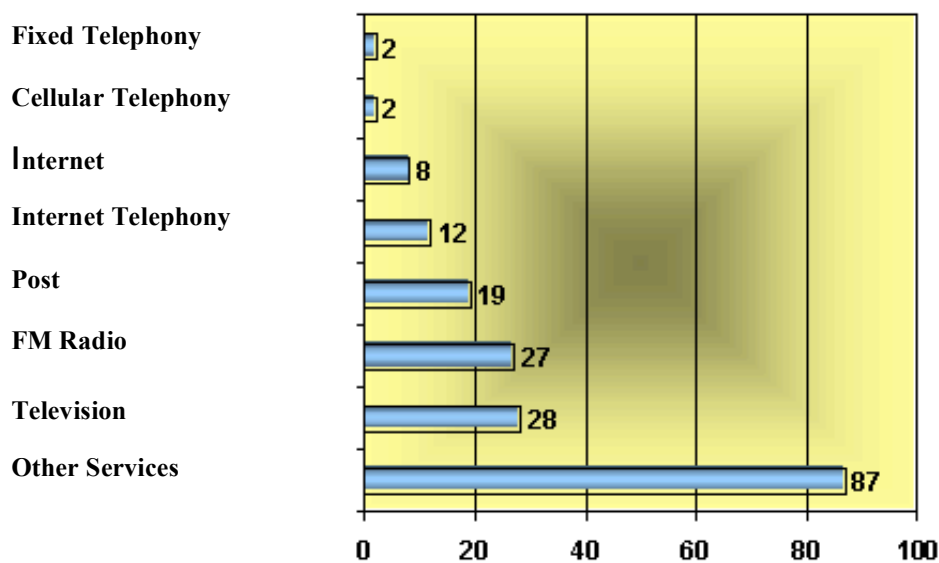
Legally, there is no difference in the entitlement of the 30 different ethnic groups to natural resources, and practically there is no variation in their access to them. Language and tribal differences have not been a point of social or political divisiveness in Mongolia. The influx of migrants to the central aimags has resulted in a greater ethnic mix, but common economic goals override ethnic distinctions.

Ethnic groups in Mongolia are descendants of Mongolian nomadic tribes. Khalkh Mongols make up 81.5 percent, Kazakhs 4.3 percent, Dorvod 2.8 percent, Bayad 2.1 percent, Buriad 1.7 percent and others 7.6 percent of the populace in 2000.

Source: NSO, Main Results, Population and Housing Census, 2000.

And **fund raising** is another benefit from the inter-sectoral approach, where partnership with private sector is crucial. This year first ever UNESCO Chair was established at the National University of Mongolia by the support of Daisan Kikaku Inc., a private owned Japanese company. Each year, prominent Japanese scholars and representatives from business community will be invited to the National University of Mongolia, School of Economics to share their experience on small and medium enterprises for duration of 3 years. The role of UNESCO is to give orientation and facilitation but not implementation. Unfortunately, the market scale of Mongolia is limited and thus, Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO doesn't have an experience of partnership with the private sector in the field of ICT.

Number of service providers in the ICT sector (data from 2003)

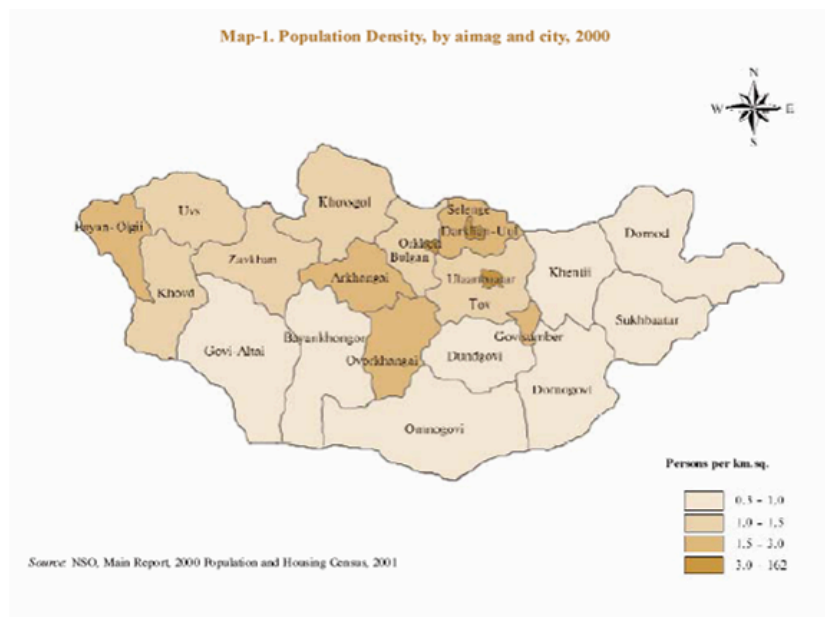


But we are optimistic and there are some reasons behind; UNESCO has a strong commitment to establish a partnership with the private sector, they have an access to different areas of expertise, broaden network, additional financial sources. And in addition to, private sector has effective and innovative services. Its image transfer role is in the past and now they do have an active participation to reach Millennium Development Goals. Let me give you a chronology of UNESCO's relations with the private sector within the UN Context.

- 1993 Creation of the Private Funding Section within Bureau for Relations with Extra-budgetary Funding Sources;
- 1995, first internal Survey, Assessment of "UNESCO's experience with fund raising in the Private Sector";
- Executive Board Guidelines on Co-operation with Private Extra-budgetary Funding Sources, in 1995 and in 1999;

- Executive Board Document on “Guidelines for selecting, partners in the Member States, including rules and regulations governing the use of UNESCO’s name and emblem by these partners”.
- Creation of the New Partnership Section in 2000;
- Internal Surveys and Reports on UNESCO’s Relations with the Private Sector and on UNESCO’s Sponsorship conducted in 2002.
- Report on “Private Sector Partnership – A Personal Contribution from a Private Sector Perspective”.

Political willingness and commitment: beside efforts of international community towards implementation of international agenda to put the potential of knowledge and information, communication technologies at the serve of development, the prime and leading role remains on governments. Each county has its own specific development situation and requirements, thus only the **Government** should aware on how should be adapted and implemented information policy, considering the context of country’s system of governance and culture.



- Capital	Ulaanbaatar
- Area	1,566,500 sq km
- Population	2,608,100
- GDP per Capita	452 US\$
- Fixed lines	131,300
- Cellular subscribers	260,100
- Internet subscribers	10,000
- Network digitization	100 %

It is fact that the Government of Mongolia has been taking political willingness and initiation to build ICT capacities in support to country's economic growth. The Action Plan of the Government of Mongolia has few major points related to the development of ICT in Mongolia. In accordance with the new law on the Government of Mongolia from 2004, Information and Communications Technology Authority (ICTA) was set up under the Prime Minister of Mongolia. The ICTA will formulate the Government policy on ICT development and coordinate policy implementation.

Improvement of the institutional and legal environment of ICT policy and regulation; IT literacy program, human resources development and capacity building; development of local language contents; ICT infrastructure building with more emphasize on rural area are major challenges and opportunity are waiting for their solution. And I believe that these are opportunities for new partnership as well.