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**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR. MUNKH-ORGIL TSEND, MP
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF MONGOLIA
AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 72nd SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**“FOCUSING ON PEOPLE: STRIVING FOR PEACE
AND A DECENT LIFE FOR ALL ON A SUSTAINABLE PLANET”**

New York, 22 September 2017

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, I join the previous speakers in expressing our solidarity and sympathy with the people and Governments of Mexico, fellow Caribbean countries and the USA hit by devastating natural disasters over the recent days.

Mr. President,

Occurrence of natural disasters across the globe has become more frequent, and their consequences even more disastrous. By some calculations, the number of natural disasters has quadrupled worldwide since 1970. There is a growing need for better national and local readiness, and a stronger regional and international cooperation. As part of this effort, Mongolia is hosting an Asian Ministerial Conference in July 2018 to effectively implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

As a result of climate change, Mongolia is exposed to multiple environmental challenges, namely desertification, drought, land degradation, wild forest fires and other calamities. Thus, preserving ecosystem balance, protecting natural resources, ensuring their appropriate use and rehabilitation, as well as promoting green economic growth are the main goals of the Government Action Plan for 2016-2020.

All of us, developed and developing nations alike, have committed to work together to address newly emerging issues induced by climate change. For its part, Mongolia has developed its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution and will work to implement its target of 14% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

Mr. President,

The theme of the general debate "Focusing on people: struggling for peace and decent life for all on sustainable planet" captures the main thrust of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.

Sustainable Development Goals, if implemented, will transform our world. But as important as SGDs are, we should not overlook the compelling need to fine-tune the overall architecture for their implementation at national, regional and global levels. An important step in this direction was taken at the last July's High-Level political forum on sustainable development. Mongolia fully supports the Forum's Declaration which emphasized the importance of fostering peaceful, just and inclusive societies and empowering vulnerable people through collective actions.¹

My country was one of the early adopters of SDGs. In February 2016, the Parliament approved the Sustainable Development Agenda of Mongolia – 2030. The Agenda

¹ Para 2 and 4, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/2017/L.29&Lang=E

envisages Mongolia becoming an upper middle income country by 2030 with poverty eradicated in all its forms while preserving ecological balance and strengthening its democratic governance. In parallel to 17 SDGs, Mongolia's Vision 2030 integrates the three pillars of development – economic, social and environmental. We have mainstreamed its goals into the Government Action Plan for 2016-2020 and other relevant programs.

Mr. President,

Among global development priorities, the special needs of landlocked developing countries come front and centre for Mongolia. According to the WTO estimates trade costs of LLDCs amount to applying an ad valorem tariff of 260 percent to international trade, and the High Representative Office concluded that the level of development of LLDCs is, on average, 20 percent lower than what it would be were they not landlocked. Mongolia is committed to the effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (2014-2024) along with other LLDCs. In this respect, it is gratifying to note that with 10 required ratifications already in place, the Multilateral Agreement establishing the International Think-Tank for LLDCs will enter into force on 6 October this year.

The Ulaanbaatar-based International Think-Tank has already been conducting its research activities with the financial contribution of the Mongolian Government and other partners. Once fully operational, the Think-Tank will further support LLDCs in their implementation of both the Vienna Program of Action and the Sustainable Development Agenda.

Enhancing connectivity is an urgent priority that all landlocked developing economies share. Mongolia acceded to the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) of the World Trade Organization in 2016. We value the Agreement's potential to reduce trade costs and boost trade for LLDCs through Article 11 on 'Freedom of Transit'. This can help LLDCs integrate in to global value chains (GVCs) and transition from landlocked to land-linked.

In order to further improve market access to main trading partners, Mongolia is studying the feasibility of free trade agreements with the Eurasian Economic Union, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea. An Economic Partnership Agreement is already in place with Japan.

To enhance regional integration in our immediate region of Northeast Asia, Mongolia is actively engaged with its neighbors on transit transportation and infrastructure development. In July 2015, the Presidents of Mongolia, China and Russia signed an agreement to develop a program on China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor between the countries. It will focus on the implementation of joint projects to increase trade turnover, ensure competitiveness in goods supply, facilitate cross-border transportation and develop infrastructure. In August 2017, the three Sides agreed on the priority projects. We are in the process of setting up a trilateral mechanism to coordinate the actual implementation of the Economic Corridor.

In December 2016, China, Mongolia and the Russian Federation signed the Intergovernmental Agreement on International Road Transport along the Asian Highway Network, marking another major step in trilateral cooperation.

Mr. President,

Mongolia is keen to further work together with our two neighbors and other partners to improve rail, road, air, energy networks and pipeline infrastructure and increase access to the sea.

Mongolia's State Policy on Energy, adopted in 2015, set an ambitious goal to produce 30 per cent of its energy demand from renewable resources by 2030. Our solar and wind resources are estimated at 7000 TW (terawatt) and 5000 TW respectively. With these resources, Mongolia has unlimited potential to export clean energy to countries in our region.

We are working with our partners to implement the Gobi Tech and the Asian Super Grid projects to supply renewable energy for the Northeast Asia. The projects offer countries in the region a wide range of economic, social and environmental benefits including energy security, job creation and reduction of carbon dioxide emissions. We look forward to working together with multilateral partners, including the ADB and IRENA, on these renewable energy projects.

Mr. President,

When the global community set out on the collective journey of the 2030 Agenda, it pledged that no one will be left behind. The SDGs have made the reduction of inequalities among people including the disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalized ones an undeniable priority for the international community.

Sustainable social development is a prominent part of the SDG Vision 2030 of Mongolia. It sets out goals to ensure gender equality, improve the quality of and access to healthcare services, create a healthy, safe living environment for its citizens, provide high quality education to every citizen, end all forms of poverty, and increase the share of the middle-income class.²

Mr. President,

Timely and effective implementation of the sustainable development agenda cannot be achieved without peace and security. However, peace is being threatened on a number of fronts.

Mongolia is deeply concerned with the escalating tension in Northeast Asia. We strongly oppose the DPRK's acts of destabilizing regional security by conducting repeated nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches in defiance of the international community's

² http://www.un-page.org/files/public/20160205_mongolia_sdv_2030.pdf

will and in violation of the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council. As a country with 25 year-old nuclear-weapon-free zone status, Mongolia reiterates its principled position that the Korean Peninsula must be nuclear-weapon-free. We urge the Parties concerned to refrain from actions that could heighten the tension in Northeast Asia and resolve the issue through peaceful means.

It is beyond doubt that the only way to resolve the Korean Peninsula's nuclear issue is through dialogue. One of the avenues of dialogue could be the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security initiated by Mongolia in 2013. We organized its 4th International Conference in Ulaanbaatar last June. Compared to previous three conferences held at Track 2 level, this year's we held it at Track 1.5 level. The dialogue discusses not only security issues in Northeast Asia but also potential projects in the energy and environmental sectors. As such, the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue is an open dialogue mechanism that ensures the participation of all countries in Northeast Asia.

Mr. President,

Current tensions have only deepened the concern associated with nuclear weapons. Mongolia welcomes the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 7 July 2017. So long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of their use will persist. The only guarantee of the non-use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. Pending the achievement of this ultimate goal, it is critical to ensure the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and vigorous implementation of action plans agreed in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We must also put an end to the protracted stalemate at the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. President,

Terrorism continues to pose a grave threat to international peace and security. Terrorist activities around the globe remain unabated. We commend Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' establishment of a new UN Office of Counter-Terrorism to provide strategic leadership to the global counter-terrorism efforts.

It is disheartening to see in the 21st century that the world is facing the largest refugee crisis since World War II. An unprecedented number of people, including the Rohingya Muslims, are forced to flee their homes. The horror of human tragedy unfolding during forced displacement must stop.

The current humanitarian emergencies require comprehensive responses which ought to include 3 elements: ensuring dignity for refugees, support host countries and address the root causes. It is the shared responsibility of all to promote safe movement of persons and respect international refugee law, human rights and humanitarian law.

Large movements of migrants require equally close attention. We look forward to the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration in 2018. It will provide a critical tool for the

protection of the safety and human rights of all migrants, regardless of their migratory status and strengthen global governance on international migration.

Mr. President,

Today the role of the United Nations peacekeeping is growing tremendously. Mongolia is proud to be contributing to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. During the past decade, Mongolia has dispatched over 15,000 Blue Helmets to a number of hot spots. As of today, Mongolia has become one of the 30 largest troop and police contributing countries³ in the world.

Mongolian peacekeepers are held in high regard for their consummate skills and community-friendly behavior in peacekeeping and reconstruction activities. Mongolian peacekeepers with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) renovated several schools in South Sudan.

We intend to further enhance our contribution through providing engineering and special units to the UN peacekeeping.

Mr. President,

Peace, development and human rights are the 3 pillars of the United Nations.

As a member of the Human Rights Council, we reaffirm our firm commitment to the eradication of the death penalty, torture and other inhuman and degrading treatment. Four days ago, we hosted together with Argentina and the European Union a high-level event to launch the Global Alliance to end trade in products used for the death penalty and torture.

Strengthening the democratic and open society governed by the rule of law is a long-standing priority for Mongolia. Accountable institutions, access to justice for everyone, significant reduction of corruption – all these are key ingredients of sustainable development as envisaged in SDG 16.

Mr. President,

At a time when the world is facing a myriad of global challenges, it is unsettling to have multilateralism questioned. In today's globalized world no one state can tackle the challenges of the time alone. Global issues require global solutions.

As the guarantor of security of all nations large and small, the UN is the centre of multilateralism. But we must enhance its role as the center for not just multilateralism but effective multilateralism. We commend the Secretary-General's vision of the UN as "an instrument for a surge in diplomacy for peace". A High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation recently established by the Secretary-General could not have been more

³ http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2016/aug16_2.pdf

timely. Its 18 eminent members bring to the board an unparalleled spectre of skills and, most importantly, credibility that is so much needed for mediation.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm once again that Mongolia fully supports the Secretary-General's reform vision to make the UN less bureaucratic and more efficient, productive and field-oriented. After all, this is the only way the UN can become stronger and more responsive to the people it serves.

Thank you for attention.