

## **TEXT OF SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE DELEGATION OF MONGOLIA**

**Mr Lambaa Sixth plenary meeting, 17 May**

**Agenda item 3: Address by the Director-General**

Mr LAMBAA (Mongolia):

Good afternoon Mr President, Madam Director-General, Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Mr President, I thank you for giving me the floor, and the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Government of Mongolia.

Mongolia has been experiencing an epidemiological transition in the pattern of mortality since the 1990s. In the past, the leading causes of death among the population were respiratory diseases, diseases of the gastrointestinal tract, and infectious diseases. However, since the beginning of the 1990s, this pattern has changed due to lifestyle and behaviour changes, with excessive consumption of alcohol and tobacco products, unhealthy diets, and the lack of physical fitness. Noncommunicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and injuries have become the leading causes of death. Today, nine out of every ten people in Mongolia die from noncommunicable diseases like cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, and injuries. This is 16 times higher than deaths caused by various infectious diseases, malnutrition, and maternal and perinatal mortality. Therefore, the Government of Mongolia has initiated a new strategy that is based on the WHO recommendations, and has been taking a number of measures to tackle the burden of noncommunicable diseases.

In terms of resource mobilization, the Government has taken decisive action that has enabled additional funding to flow to the existing public health expenditure by making amendments to the Law on Government Special Funds. The Government established its National Health Promotion Fund in 2006, the initial financial disbursement of which came only from the 2% tax on tobacco products. Starting from 2010, proceeds from a 1% tax on the sales of alcohol products, and a 2% import tax on pharmaceuticals have been directed to the National Health Promotion Fund and spent on financing of public health programmes, and activities fighting against harmful use of alcohol and tobacco products, and promoting rational use of medicines.

In addition, the Government has continuously received WHO technical and financial support for preventing and controlling noncommunicable diseases, for which my Government has been very grateful. WHO provides approximately US\$ 300 000 to support its programme on noncommunicable disease control and prevention. Other partner organizations have significantly increased their support as well. In 2008, my Government entered into a Millennium Challenge Compact for the Millennium Challenge

Account under which a US\$ 39.1 million Health Project on Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases and Road Traffic Injuries has been implemented since 2009 for a five-year period. This Project greatly contributes to the implementation of the National Programme on Noncommunicable Disease Prevention and Control.

To name some latest measures, in early 2011, the President of Mongolia launched an Initiative “Alcohol Free Mongolia,” under which a nationwide campaign against excessive alcohol use has been taking place at family, individual, and community levels. The health sector workers have since shown a great deal of enthusiasm and are aspiring to be the role models of this initiative.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Health of Mongolia has recently submitted a draft law to the Parliament that prohibits smoking in all public places and imposes special permits for all business entities and individuals who import, distribute and sell tobacco products.

My Government was presented with opportunities to make visible progress in strengthening tobacco control activities upon becoming a party to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Likewise, my Government stresses the importance of developing and endorsing a WHO Framework Convention on Alcohol Control to guide the combined efforts of the international community. My Government stands fully committed to cooperate on this initiative.

Thank you for your attention.

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