



UNDP: Young People Critical to Mongolia's Future

14 June, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia - With northeast Asia's youngest population and more than a third of citizens at working-age, land-locked Mongolia has the potential to develop rapidly in the coming decades.

To unlock that potential, expanding the capabilities and choices of young people is crucial, says the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its latest Regional Human Development Report. Now is the time to capitalize on this, to ensure that Mongolia's demographic dividend does not become a demographic burden.

The report - "Building a Better Tomorrow: Including Youth in the Development of Mongolia" - examines the opportunities and challenges affecting young Mongolians' capabilities, empowerment and security. It notes that while Mongolia has made striking progress on the human development index (HDI) - crossing the threshold for 'high' human development in 2015 for the first time - this progress has not always translated into better opportunities for young people.

Young Mongolians, for example, face higher chances of unemployment, with 17.4 percent of 20-24 year olds without jobs, compared to 7.9 percent nationally. Life expectancy of the youth has also increased at a slower rate than average. While life expectancy for the population overall increased by 9 years between 1990-2014, life expectancy for young women aged 15-34 has increased only by close to 3 years whereas life expectancy for young men has decreased by a little more than one year. Accidents and injuries account for the leading causes of death and risk factors include alcohol abuse, unbalanced diets, tobacco consumption and inactive lifestyles.

"Young Mongolians in this age group are the first generation to grow up under democracy, with new ideas and aspirations," said Beate Trankmann, Resident Representative of the UNDP in Mongolia. "They are more global in their outlook, 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 calls for the greater focus on the needs and aspirations of young Mongolians and for young people to be involved in finding solutions. Key recommendations include: providing

more youth health services, boosting jobs by better matching the education system to employer needs and harnessing technology to encourage youth participation in public life.

Young people are critical to meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Development Agenda to end poverty, protect the planet and create prosperity for all. Ensuring them access to quality education, healthcare and employment, as well as encouraging their engagement in politics, is key to achieving that ambitious agenda.

The First World Youth Policy Forum was held in 2014 in Baku, Azerbaijan, where policymakers from across the world recommended that countries formulate comprehensive national youth development policies.

“Youth represent significant potential for a nation’s future and the major driving force of any country,” says Erdene Sodnomzundui, Minister of Population Development and Social Protection. “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.

The Ministry has been working on the state policy on youth development since 2015. Research and recommendations of the sixth National Human Development Report are already helping to shape national youth policies.

The sixth National Human Development Report was jointly developed by national and international experts, with the support of the UNDP in Mongolia and benefited from extensive youth and stake-holder consultations and technical inputs throughout its preparation. It is one of many reports compiled by the UNDP globally, working with countries around the world to identify key policy challenges and solutions to human development.

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Contact UNDP in Mongolia

Media inquiries

Jargalsaikhan. P, Communication Analyst

Phone: 976-11 327585-1133, 99135393

Mobile: jargalsaikhan.purevdorj@undp.org

Follow us:

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Phone:976-11-327585

registry.mn@undp.org

Fax: 976-11-326221