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STATEMENT BY

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MINISTER OF MONGOLIA, DEPUTY CHAIR OF THE
NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON GENDER EQUALITY**

**AT THE 56TH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

New York, 2 March 2012

Madam Chairperson,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government of Mongolia attaches particular importance to the priority theme of this session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Indeed, ensuring gender equality, in particular improving the situation of rural women and promoting rural development is critical for implementing the Millennium Development Goals, Beijing Platform for Action and promoting sustainable development.

A lot has been achieved in advancing the situation of rural women in many countries around the world since the adoption of Beijing Platform of Action and MDGs. Yet, still a lot more needs to be done to deliver on our commitments and promises to the rural women. In this respect, I believe that a targeted development strategy formulated with an active participation of rural women and based on their best practices could prove effective.

My Government is fully committed to the advancement of rural women. Mongolia has been the main sponsor of the General Assembly resolution on improving the situation of rural women. At the national level, we have put in place a Gender Equality Law, MDGs and MDGs-based Comprehensive National Development Strategy, as well as other relevant programs. Our main focus in recent years has been on women's economic empowerment through support for household development and small and medium-size production. For instance, in 2011 my Government allocated about 300 million dollars as soft loan to small and medium size businesses, 70 percent of them are run by women entrepreneurs.

Our efforts also include promotion of increased access for rural women to quality education, reproductive health services, and addressing gender-based violence and discrimination. Furthermore, certain headways have been made in strengthening the national mechanism for gender equality and providing an enabling legal environment.

However, weak infrastructure, nomadic animal husbandry and remoteness from urban settlements along with high vulnerability to natural disasters make all the more challenging our efforts in implementing policies aimed at improving the situation of rural women. In

addition, increased awareness of gender issues especially at primary level administration is critical. Therefore, it is essential to mainstream gender equality principles into policies, programs and activities, introduce gender-responsive budgeting, and allocate separate funding for those purposes.

Here, I wish to stress the importance of addressing natural disaster-induced poverty among rural women. It has emerged as one of the critical issues that warrant global attention. The past years' bitter lessons remind us that we cannot reduce poverty and migration of rural population without changing our attitude towards nature and environment and enhancing disaster risk management capabilities.

Madam Chair,

Another emerging challenge is related to formulation of an appropriate state policy in the mining sector, that has been booming in Mongolia and some other countries over the recent past, to fully respond to the development needs of the local population. Poverty among rural women and their subsequent migration to urban areas could be substantially reduced through making rural small and medium-size producers as main suppliers for mining companies as well as through focusing on employees' social and health insurance and other family welfare issues.

Madam Chair,

All in all, poverty among rural women, be they farmers or herders, can be reduced mainly through their economic empowerment. Hence, my delegation wishes to propose to the UN-Women to consider allocating certain amount of resources from the Gender Equality Fund for projects designed to economically empower rural women, including assisting interested countries in developing micro-credit funds and women's banks.

I thank you for your attention.