Some Issues related to Sustainable Livelihood of Mongolians

Goal: study changes in traditions of and attitudes towards sustainable livelihood of the Mongolians, state, private and public attitude and skills of managing influences of nature

Objectives:
- Conduct review of Mongolian’s traditions of and attitudes towards protecting nature;
- Study livelihood-related values of contemporary Mongolians;
- Study changes in the attitudes and practices of the state, private and public players against the backdrop of increased dependence of livelihood on the forces of the nature.

Research methods: Document analysis, synthesys

Findings:

Since 1990 when the country embarked on large-scale reform encompassing political, economic, cultural, social spheres of the society, Mongolia has been developing and implementing sustainable development strategies that are embedded in its unique cultural heritage. A new Constitution of Mongolia from 1992 has provided for the right to live in healthy and safe environment, Mongolia’s National Development Strategy from 1996 has incorporated sustainable development concept, while poverty reduction program (mid-1990s), national program for sustainable development (1998), and Millenium Development Goals-based National Development strategy (2008) are being implemented. Policies, institutions and processes that have important influences on the sustainable development are being studied and introduced. But there is a notable lack of government attention to developing comprehensive approach to such pressing issues as poverty and environment, implementing effective cross-sectoral coordination, and providing sustainable funding. Private sector lack well-established good governance, especially in the area of nature protection.

Traditional reliance on narrow local social network, a network of relatives and high emphasis on education of children continue to be dominant values in the life of contemporary Mongolians. A lot of effort by contemporary Mongolians is devoted to improved education, healthy living and working environment, safe food, generation of income and savings through labor and work. Loans, debt, remittance, cash transfer and welfare payments have come to constitute solid parts of household income and expenditure. Mechanisms of public participation in decision-making and contribution to national development through voluntary associations and NGO creation is striving. Public initiatives especially in the areas of land, water and wildlife animal protection, fight against all kinds of pollution are gaining more prominence and importance.

Conclusion:

But climate change affecting Mongolia, mining-based economic growth, populist welfare and social security policies and practices require better coordination between strategies and policies designed to facilitate adaptation to climate change, to effectively manage economic growth and to reduce poverty.
Although it is important to foster development of Mongolians who think globally, it is even more important to support Mongolians who can act locally. In short, can we “think globally to adapt to climate change and benefit from globalization but act locally in a unified manner”? We Mongolians are at the crossroads that make us either people who are struck by the resource curse, dependent on welfare cash and separated along narrow interests or a country with comprehensive and well-coordinated economic, social, cultural, political and ecological development which will allow provision for current needs without offsetting benefits of future generations.

Greater public monitoring and participation in coordination and coherence of government economic, social and ecological decisions are a positive turn. But coherence of economic, social and ecological decisions made at the household level are no less important. From this point of view, creation of legal environment allowing the use of ecological fees and compensation mechanisms to limit the production and services with harmful impact on the nature is most pressing. Current practices that result in possibilities to use mineral deposits and wild nature resources in a manner that have deteriorating effect on nature, provision of workplaces that provide just enough income to tend for current livelihood needs of local community members while importing unprocessed raw materials at low cost losing a change to locally produce value-added products are all depriving the future generations of resources and opportunities to take care of their needs.

Focus on poverty and nature production has not yet become that main strategy for sustainable livelihood.