

Empowerment for Urban Governance and Sustainable Urbanization

UN-Habitat, the **United Nations Human Settlements Programme**, has been collaborating with the Government of Mongolia and the Municipality of Ulaanbaatar on strategies and demonstration projects for slum upgrading since 2005. It assisted the municipality in formulating a community-based *ger* area upgrading strategy, developing action plans and is presently demonstrating a community-led approach to *ger* area upgrading in 5 *ger* areas in Ulaanbaatar City.



UN-Habitat's Work

UN-Habitat helps the urban poor by transforming cities into safer, healthier, greener places with better opportunities where everyone can live with dignity. It is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable communities, towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all and sustainable urbanisation. UN-Habitat's work programme targets MDG Target 10 and 11.

The Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) of UN-Habitat, in Fukuoka, Japan, serves 39 countries in the Asia and Pacific region in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. UN-Habitat ROAP provides support to individual governments and their national and local partners and monitors progress being made in the region. In 13 countries, mostly in LDCs and fragile states, UN-Habitat assists in implementation and demonstration programmes. ROAP is responsible for about 50% of UN-Habitat's work programme.

UN-Habitat's main donors in Asia Pacific are the Government of Japan, DfID, USAID, AusAID, the European Union, the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), the Asian Development Bank, One-UN, and the Cities Alliance. Other donors are, among others, Spain, SIDA, Norway, New Zealand, Korea, CIDA, and the Netherlands.

UN-Habitat in Mongolia

As more than 50% of the country's population now live in urban areas, sustainable urbanization has become a major agenda of the present government and its development partners. The unplanned settlements in the *ger* areas continue to grow as more people from the countryside flock to the cities in search for better opportunities. This puts pressure on the government to provide basic services and infrastructure which entail huge resources given the terrain and the high construction cost in very cold climate. Urban poverty is increasingly becoming a challenge. In Ulaanbaatar City, 67% of the population lives in the *ger* areas and majority of them are poor. Employability is very low as skills are not suited to the requirements of the urban economy. Institutional capacity, both the government and its civil society partners, needs enhancement in the areas of developing policies, strategies, and programmes appropriate to the needs of the urban poor groups and country context.

As the agency of the UN responsible for promoting sustainable urbanization, the UN-Habitat has been focusing its support to the government in developing the strategy and approach in slum upgrading with strong partnership with the Municipality of Ulaanbaatar and the national government.

Citywide Pro-Poor Ger Area Upgrading Strategy and Investment Plan Project -2005-2010: \$500,000. Funded by the Cities Alliance (Washington), the project delivered *ger* area upgrading strategy for Ulaanbaatar city. It also formulated *ger* area upgrading action plan templates for redevelopment, community-based upgrading, and for protection of *ger* areas against flashfloods. UN-Habitat also included activities of its Sustainable Cities Programme, funded by the Netherlands, for the component on Environmental Planning and Management. The strategy was approved by the City Council for implementation through a resolution in 2007. This strategy classified the *ger* areas into 3 categories – central, middle, and peri-urban compared to just one zone, and defined the specific strategies per category. The strategy is being used by the government and other development institutions in developing their policies and programmes.

Community-led Ger Area Upgrading in Ulaanbaatar City Project- 2009-2011/up to end 2013: US\$5,859,000. Funded by the Government of Japan, this project is demonstrating that communities can plan and manage *ger* area upgrading in cooperation with the government. The project is resulting in 5 Khoroo CDCs (Community Development Councils), 47 Kheseg CDCs, 15 public amenities and over 100 small neighbourhood improvement projects. In addition, 65 savings and lending groups have been set up, to further promote the development of social capital. The public amenities include

public service centers, bath houses with rental spaces, elderly center, kindergartens, school facilities and community halls. The residents have started to experience improvement in their physical conditions through better access to small infrastructure facilities and increased income from temporary and permanent employment in the construction works and as staff in the public service facilities. The CDCs have significantly improved organizational, project, and financial management skills, with capacity to build linkages with government and other donors, and are now taking the lead in their own development with little supervision from UN-Habitat. Under this project, the UN-Habitat has also demonstrated the effectiveness of the People's Process in addressing land readjustment issues through a pilot project in 2 of the project areas.

ADB TA 7970-MON: Ulaanbaatar Urban Services and Ger Area Development Investment Program (Ulaanbaatar Urban Renewal Community Participation)- October 2012-April 2013: US\$ 69,265

The UN-Habitat Mongolia is currently providing support to the ongoing ADB Project Preparatory Technical Assistance (PPTA) for **Ulaanbaatar Urban Services and Ger Area Development Investment Program** which will be implemented from July 2012-July 2013. In line with the Investment Program's aim of promoting an inclusive peri-urban development in the *ger* areas of Ulaanbaatar City, the UN-Habitat will mobilize and organize the community members and business owners to support the redevelopment of the *ger* areas through the sub-center development. The organized community and business groups will help define the land use plan, land transformation/readjustment, and local development and investment plans/program based on the needs identified and prioritized by them as reflected in the Community Action Plan (CAP). The consultative and participatory approach to *ger* area redevelopment introduced by this PPTA through the UN-Habitat involvement will engender increased sense of ownership and stakeholdership among the community members and business owners and enhance their willingness and affordability to pay for the services that will be introduced by the Investment Program.

UN-Habitat's Future in Mongolia

Mongolia's lower-MIC status is constraining conventional grant assistance. Nonetheless, UN-Habitat's partners, Ministry of Construction and Urban Development (MCUD) and Municipality of Ulaanbaatar as well as National Development and Innovation Committee, Ministry of Social Welfare and Ministry of Labour, request technical assistance on several issues: a) community empowerment for urban development; b) preparation of the Human Settlements Development Framework (HSDF); c) policy and programming know-how for the 100,000 housing /apartment programme; d) planning and policy support for urbanization strategies and migration and eviction issues in relation to urban growth and de-population; e) urban services delivery; f) resettlement of the families squatting in apartments; g) urban poverty reduction through skills development and job creation; and, h) land readjustment for *ger* area upgrading. Several of these issues are part of the UN Development Assistance Framework priorities for Mongolia. UN-Habitat will build partnerships and collaborate with development agencies and donors to support government address these issues in a strategic way.



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