

# Early Action Warning Workshop

## Remarks by Beate Trankmann, United Nations Mongolia Resident Coordinator and UN Development Programme Resident Representative

Your Excellency, Prime Minister Ukhnaa Khurelsukh, distinguished aimag leaders, ladies and gentlemen:

In 2017, Mongolia witnessed its hottest summer in 56 years. As a result, more than two thirds of the country have been suffering from drought. Pasture growth has not been sufficient to feed the more than 60 million livestock that graze on Mongolia's land or to prepare enough hay reserves for winter. This puts the livelihoods of 160 thousand herder households at risk whose coping capacities are already stretched by falling incomes, rising debt and two harsh dzud winters in a row.

Mongolia is one of the most sensitive countries to climate change on earth. Over the last 70 years, its temperatures have risen by 2.2 degree centigrade and are already above the threshold that the rest of the world is trying to avoid. As a consequence, we are seeing not only hotter summers, but also harsher winters in Mongolia.

In the face of global warming, adaptation and risk management are vital.

Long term, we need to re-examine land use and pasture management to prevent over-grazing, which is adding to the strain on the grasslands caused by climate change. We must move from quantity of livestock to quality, to reduce pressure on the land and ecosystems and ensure that they can sustain the herds on which herding families depend for food and income.

In the short term, we must strengthen our early warning systems. This means developing clear protocols for coordinated, targeted early action at the first sight of distress signals. It will also entail identifying which communities are most vulnerable and will need to be targeted with specific early action and resilience building measures. Taking such precautions, will prevent predictable slow-onset weather events - such as dzuds - from becoming a humanitarian emergency.

We know that early response and resilience building does not only prevent loss of life and suffering but is also crucial to protect development gains necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

In line with this logic, the aim of this workshop - organised by the Government of Mongolia and the UN - is to develop an action template for efficient preparedness and early action to dzuds and climatic weather events in Mongolia.

Investing in preparedness also makes economic sense even in times of tight budgets. Our global experience has shown that every dollar spent on preparedness saves 7 dollars in response.

I congratulate the Government of Mongolia on responding proactively to these challenges. The revised Disaster Risk Management law, for example, rightly puts disaster preparedness and protection as well as enhanced coordination across government levels as a crucial measure to reduce risks.

Coordination combined with close communication between the national and local government levels is indeed critical because of the key role local communities and governments play in raising the alarm and prevention danger. This is why I am very pleased to see all Aimag deputy governors, local NEMA chiefs and heads of agricultural departments participating today

The United Nations has a long-standing relationship with the Government of Mongolia in preventing, preparing for and managing disasters. Over a decade ago, we helped establish the National Emergency Management Agency. Today, we are jointly managing the Humanitarian Country Team.

We look forward to working with you further in this crucial area, to save lives and strengthen the resilience of every Mongolian, however remote they may be.

Thank you.