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On September 20, 2012, Ambassador Piper Campbell and USAID Representative Frank Donovan opened “The Art of Caring”, an exhibition of artwork by children in Arhangai in support of the rights of persons with disabilities. Produced during USAID’s “Fostering an Inclusive Environment for Local Disabled” project, the children’s art was a beautiful celebration of the contributions of the disabled to their communities, the Mongolian society, and the world. Six of Mongolia’s Paralympian athletes also helped kick-off the event, sharing stories of their own personal journeys and triumphs that led them to London. To view photos of the event, please visit <http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.392603960806467.89424.117342531665946&type=3>.



The Art of Caring exhibit

On September 28, 2012, Ambassador Piper Campbell and USAID Representative Frank Donovan officially launched USAID’s flagship democracy and governance projects: Strengthening Transparency and Governance (STAGE) and Active Partnerships and Public Engagement for Accountable Localities (APPEAL). STAGE, implemented by The Asia Foundation, will assist the government of Mongolia in addressing needed reforms at the national level through technical assistance, capacity building, and civil society strengthening. APPEAL, implemented by Mercy Corps, will contribute to stronger more dynamic, participatory governance that supports economic growth at the local level. The launch event was attended by members of Parliament, Ministers, representatives of the international community, and media.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Private Sector-led Economic Growth

- Business Plus Initiative (BPI)

Democracy & Governance

- Active Partnerships and Public Engagements for Accountable Localities (APPEAL)

USAID Centrally and Regionally Funded Projects

- Sustainable Conservation Approaches in Priority EcosystemS (SCAPES)
- Fostering an Inclusive Environment for the Local Disabled (FIELD) - 2



New Development Priorities of the Mongolian Government: The Prime Minister introduced the new incoming government's key priorities as well as his new Cabinet members in a September 7th address to the diplomatic and international community. He outlined the three top priorities of job and income creation, anti-corruption, and accountability; he stated that previous GoM commitments will continue to be honored and that foreign direct investment in Mongolia is welcome. He cited the short-term importance of the mining sector and used a "rainbow" metaphor to explain needed diversification of the Mongolian economy.

national government develop communications and management procedures to effectively coordinate disaster response efforts. In FY 2012, USAID/OFDA has provided a total of \$110,000 to the USFS to conduct ICS training and disaster simulations for Mongolia's National Emergency Management Agency.

PEER Project address Critical Issues in Mongolia: Dr. Dalal from the National Academy of Sciences visited Mongolia in late September to Mongolia to monitor Mongolia's two Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research (PEER) projects as well as discuss the PEER program with potential applicants.

The PEER Science program makes grants available to scientist and engineers to address global development challenges by building international research collaborations. Two Mongolia organizations have ongoing projects through the program, one monitoring air pollution in Ulaanbaatar and the second focusing on climate change in the Lake Hovsgol area. USAID Representative Frank Donovan provided an overview presentation about USAID to university students during Dr. Dalal's visit.



New Government for Changes

USAID Participates in Symposium in East Asia Security (SEAS) Events Hosted in Mongolia: Sponsored by the Department of State and the US Pacific Command, SEAS is a three-week, highly intensive program designed for military and civilian defense professionals from Asian nations key to U.S. regional security. USAID contributed to the design of the program, and the USAID Representative moderated a panel on disaster assistance preparedness and the roles of Mongolian NGOs, civilian government agencies and the international community in preparing for and responding to disasters.

PRIVATE SECTOR-LED ECONOMIC GROWTH

Business Plus Initiative Project (BPI) Chemonics

Building Momentum for Reform. In September the Mongolia Business Plus Initiative project brought the former Minister of Finance and the former Minister of Economic Development of the Republic of Georgia, Mr. Aleksis Aleksishvili, to share his experiences as a key architect of his country's stunningly successful business enabling environment reforms.

OFDA Disaster Preparedness Training Helps Mongolia Address a Variety of Potential Disasters: A four-day USAID/OFDA-sponsored Incident Command System (ICS) Training course on September 10th was carried out by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to help Mongolia's



A crowd of officials listen as Mr. Aleksishvili presents Georgia's reforms to construction permitting.

Given the sheer demand from the government to hear Mr. Aleksishvili's message, BPI organized 12 private meetings with high level government officials and four presentations on Georgia's reforms to tax administration, construction permitting, and customs procedures. Approximately 200 government officials attended these four presentations.



Mr. Aleksishvili and Prime Minister of Mongolia Altankhuyag N. listen during the "Working Together for Reforms" Forum.

The Mongolian public was also keenly interested in Mr. Aleksishvili's message that through simple reforms to the legal and regulatory environment Mongolia can improve the ability of companies to do business and attract greater foreign investment. BPI partner, The Press Institute of Mongolia, organized a roundtable discussion between private sector lawyers and Mr. Aleksishvili in front of an audience of 27 economic journalists. Another local partner of BPI, the Economic Policy and Competitiveness Research Center, co-hosted with BPI a "Working Together for Reforms" Forum bringing together more than 100 people from the business community to present 10 targeted action plans to improve business enabling environment and competitiveness to the government. Mr. Aleksishvili gave the key note address at the forum and the Prime Minister of Mongolia received the action plans.

In the coming weeks, BPI will organize video conferences between the General Department of Taxation, the Ministry of Construction and City Planning, and the Ulaanbaatar Municipality with Georgian technical counterparts to continue the knowledge transfer.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

Active Partnerships and Public Engagements for Accountable Localities (APPEAL) Mercy Corps.

APPEAL Is At Full Speed.

Even though August and September are holiday months in Mongolia, the APPEAL project has con-

nected with and mobilized thousands of citizens and hundreds of local officials already. Mercy Corps encouraged open, participatory and competitive procedure to select 60 target soums of APPEAL project. In late August, Mercy Corps field staff conveyed an invitation and application forms to all 251 soum authorities of the target provinces asking for their interest to improve their good governance practice as partnering with the project. The project team received 143 applications which represented 60% of all soums of the 15 target provinces within the deadline. This high percentage shows strong willingness of Mongolian local authorities to strengthen the admin reform and good governance practice under the project partnership. A joint committee of soum selection was established in every province including representatives from provincial Citizens Representative Hural, Governor's Office and Civil Society Organizations Network. After the project team review, the sixty soums were selected finally in this month.

APPEAL and STAGE Official Launch Promotes Linkages and Synergies

APPEAL and STAGE projects are launched officially on September 28, 2012 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with important representatives of government, civil society and other stakeholders from both national and local level. Keynoting the event was Ambassador Piper Anne Wind Campbell, USAID Representative Francis Donovan, and the Deputy of the Cabinet Secretariat, Mrs. Solongo. Presentations of APPEAL/STAGE enabled interesting and engaging discussions and further linkages with other stakeholders during the reception.



APPEAL Chief of Party O. Munkhaya gives overview of the project as US Ambassador Piper Campbell listens

USAID CENTRALLY AND REGIONALLY FUNDED PROJECTS

Sustainable Conservation Approaches in Priority EcoSystems (SCAPES) Project -- USAID Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

Rare Pride and Collaborative Wildlife Protection Training on the Eastern Steppe: The second in a series of trainings designed to “remove barriers” to effective wildlife protection on the steppe by engaging motivated citizens who have come forward to play the role of “soum volunteer rangers” was organized September 17th – 18th in Choibalsan, Dornod Province. The training was co-hosted by the Environmental Protection and Tourism Agency and is part of the effort to address illegal hunting and wildlife trade in this portion of the Daurian Steppe by enhancing collaboration among citizens, community-based organizations and government agencies to improve the public’s awareness of the value of biodiversity and the laws and regulations governing the harvest and trade of steppe wildlife.

New “Nature Conservation Communities” formed on Mongolia’s Eastern Steppe: On September 14th the SCAPES community outreach team visited Tcvshiin Ukhua, a newly formed Nature Conserva-



tion Community near Toson Khulstai Nature Reserve in Khulunbuir Soum of Dornod Province. The community members gathered at the community leader’s ger to develop a management plan for their community managed area. The SCAPES project team worked with the members to estimate the historic and current status of wildlife populations in the community-managed area and set future goals and conservation targets. The community produced a habitat map, a record of current levels of natural resource use and a list of conservation actions and management activities. Similar outreach meetings with newly established Nature Conservation Communities will continue through the fall.

Hunters on the Eastern Steppe Discuss New Environmental Legislation: The SCAPES project and the Eastern Steppe Rare Pride Campaign held the third set in a series of workshops for hunters on Mongolia’s Eastern Steppe September 13th – 15th in Tsagaan Ovoo, Khulunbuir and Bayantumen Soums, which all surround Toson Hulstai Nature Reserve. Forty-five individuals (40 men; 5 women) officially registered for the workshops that were advertised through soum government announcements, local radio and SMS text messages. The focus of this series of workshops was the “Law on Fauna” passed by Parliament in May 2012 as part of the package of new environmental laws. The new law includes provisions that reference the establishment of specific game hunting areas, community management of game hunting areas and training requirements for hunters. The Environmental Protection and Tourism Agency is tasked with certifying hunters under the new law and has approached the SCAPES project for assistance with a training program and strategy for hunter outreach and communication.

Fostering an Inclusive Environment for the Disabled 2 (FIELD 2) Mercy Corps

Literacy Inclusion. The Uvs branch of National Association for the Blind implemented a subgrant project “Braille literature”. In the project, 6 people with visual disabilities learned to read and write. Even though the project was brief, the activity opened new doors for beneficiaries. One beneficiary has been selected to undergo massage therapist training in UB for 6 months with the National Association for the Blind funding. Two students submitted official letters to study at the informal education center. Two other students submitted applications to the local vocational education center. Also, in Uvs aimag, a “Braille day” takes place every Wednesday and students of the “Braille training” project began to teach other members braille literature.

A Little Support Helps A Lot. The Arhangai Association of Parents with Disabled Children (APDC) was awarded a subgrant to support an income generation project. In total, 15 mothers of children with disabilities formed three groups to produce felt, handicrafts and sewing products. In September their income reached to about MNT1 million. In addition, they established a day care center for their children with the support of the World Vision branch in Arhangai aimag. In September, handicrafts of this group were included in an exhibition, The Art of Caring, organized by USAID and the Public Affairs Section and opened by US Ambassador Piper Anne Wind Campbell.