



## NATIONAL FORUM

**The National Forum is organised within the framework of the project  
*Promoting Human and Labour Rights through GSP+.***

**Date:** 23-24 May 2019

**Venue:** Holiday Inn Hotel, 19<sup>th</sup> floor  
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

### CONCEPT NOTE

The present concept note is for the National Forum to be held in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia.

The National Forum is organised within the framework of the project *Promoting Human and Labour Rights through GSP+*, a programme funded by the EU that aims at supporting civil society organisations in their efforts to raise awareness and advocate for full implementation of fundamental rights. The nine target countries of this programme (Armenia, Bolivia, Cabo Verde, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Paraguay, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka) are benefitting from economic incentives from the EU thanks to a trade mechanism called Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+). In addition to providing economic incentives, the GSP+ requests to beneficiary countries to make progresses in their compliance with 27 UN Conventions related to human rights, labour rights, environment and good governance. This component of the scheme is particularly relevant in today's context where respect for human rights and democracy cannot be taken for granted; it is crucial to make use of any opportunity to empower individuals and organisations and promote a culture of human rights.

In Mongolia the programme is implemented by the Globe International Centre (GIC).

### Background

Despite the promulgation of the 1992 Constitution, which establishes the main institutional framework for Mongolia, there remain significant concerns and limitations that impinge upon the full exercise of civil and political rights. Mongolia has ratified all 27 of the GSP+ conventions and the country demonstrates a good level of meeting its reporting obligations, however, the country has ongoing difficulties in implementing their provisions. Mongolia appears to be consolidating democracy, but the lack of awareness on the fundamental rights and freedoms to which citizens are entitled, as well as failure of rule of law, is in fact, threatening the full implementation of its obligations before the international community.



GIC is using the opportunity created by this programme to focus on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), specifically on Article 19, in order to contribute to the improvement of the situation of freedoms of opinion and expression and the full implementation of the article's provisions.

Mongolia ratified the ICCPR in 1974, yet has persistent difficulties in implementing its provisions.

The UN Human Rights Committee's 120<sup>th</sup> session in Geneva reviewed Mongolia's sixth periodic report on the ICCPR on 6-7 July 2017.

Mongolia accepted the UPR recommendations of 8 countries on Freedom of Expression in 2015. The UPR and ICCPR recommendations focus on harmonising the national legislation with the ICCPR to ensure journalists' safety. The government policies include: An Action Plan on Implementation of the UPR Recommendations (April 2016); National Anti-Corruption Program (November 2016); and an Action Plan (2017) that pledges to provide the legal protection of journalists' safety. Despite these policies existence, there is a lack of implementation.

Mongolia has submitted the UPR mid-term report in May 2018. The second UPR review is scheduled in May 2020. The Human Rights NGO Forum will send the NGO submission in September 2019.

In light of the upcoming Voluntary National Review (VNR) to the United Nations High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2019, the Mongolian Government is developing its VNR and civil society is also developing the spotlight report. SDGs Targets 1 and 8 are directly connected to the GSP+ mechanism in terms of poverty reduction and economic growth. Freedom of expression and freedom of information, which fall specifically under SDG target 16.10 (*Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms*), are both a target and a driver of sustainable development. SDG target 16.10 plays a crucial role in the awareness and the implementation of the whole 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: only informed citizens are empowered to participate in, advocate for and monitor meaningful progress towards positive change.

GIC has cooperated with Free Press Unlimited (FPU) and Deutsche Welle Akademie (DW Akademie) and UNESCO National Commission with a specific focus on SDG Indicator 16.10 in conducting studies on the implementation of the Mongolia's right to information law and the two Consultative Meetings. The results will be shared at the National Forum.

The VNR is a new for the Mongolian society and efforts are needed to link the GSP+ as an opportunity for the country's sustainable development agenda.



Mr. Michel Forst, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders is in the country and GIC has a meeting him on 1 May and follow up meeting on 8 May 2019. The facts revealed by the GIC monitoring on the safety of journalists were used for the GIC and MCM meeting with him.

*The project Promoting Human and Labour Rights through GSP+ is coming to the end and GIC Team as carried out numbers of activities in the three areas: i) Raising awareness; ii) Capacity Building and Monitoring and iii) Convening Stakeholders.*

The project has started the awareness raising activities with Inception Workshop held in UB was batch of covered 21 aimag local representatives of the MCC, NHRC and media to introduce and discuss the GSP+ and issues of the core international conventions, and for participants to gain initial knowledge and skills on the practice of the ICCPR Article 19.

Under the second component, the project organized the Capacity building training for media and civil society and produced Media Handbook. The project conducted the monitoring on the safety of journalists and legislative framework in partnership with MCM and MBA. The findings will be included to the NGO submission to the second cycle of the UPR in September 2019 and further advocacy for the safe environment for the journalists.

The third component included 8 Town Hall meetings held in the capital and 7 provincial towns of Arkhangai, Darkhan-uul, Bayankhongor, Orkhon, Sukhbaatar, Tuv and Uvs provinces and it involved over 270 stakeholder representatives.

## Purpose

The National Forum is under this area and it is the final event of the project.

This one and half day event is aimed at concluding the project activities and its results and it will bring an estimated 60 representatives of the various stakeholders. The participants will be aware about civil society monitoring results and recommendations to the relevant counterparts and contribute to the further strategy.

### Specific Objectives:

- 1) To inform the attendees in the project results and outcomes
- 2) To foster synergies of the current initiatives in promoting GSP+ core conventions
- 3) To provide a platform for the further strategy via discussing the recommendations to the relevant counterparts

### Expected Outcomes:

- Raised awareness on the current status of the freedoms of expression, media and information and crucial human rights concerns in the country



- Improved knowledge on the role of the GPS+ in the economic growth and sustainable development agenda through recognized role of the CSOs in promotion of GSP+ and core conventions
- Recommendations and further strategy are available

## Topics

The National Forum will be structured within the following three frames:

- What Is Done?
- What are the Current Concerns?
- What is Next?

As a part of the first frame, the first day of the National Workshop is devoted to informing the stakeholders on the project achievements and share the findings of the monitoring as well as GSP+ status of utilizing in Mongolia.

Regarding the current concerns, second half of the day will focus on the hot issues such as torture and child violation as a reason of re-introducing the death penalty. The discussions will be built on the inputs provided by local experts.

The latter half of the first day will have a panel about a linkage between SDGs and GSP+ and the VNR process in Mongolia. The participants will be informed in the VNR process and exchange information and views how GSP+ is linked to the SDGs, particularly poverty and economic growth.

The second day starts with panel discussion on the labour and human rights as an essential part of the company governance and development of a National Plan on Business and Human Rights.

The rest until the end of the second day will be devoted to discussing the recommendations and participants will come up with their ideas on the further strategy that is useful to encourage GSP+ and core conventions.

The event will be widely covered by media and flyers informing on the monitoring results and project outcomes will be distributed to the participants and journalists.