

Mongolia

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I bring greetings from the people of Mongolia, which is located in the heart of Asia and has an ancient history, to all of you who come representing the minds and peaceful intentions from all the corners of the world.

I want to thank for all those who organized this symposium and united all the representatives who have the same sky and the same earth and gave us an opportunity to share our opinions, actions and goals.

You might know that Mongolia has a governmental history of thousands of years, and is the center of the nomadic traditions of Eurasia. Even now, we still keep our traditions in a country of broad valleys, mountains and deserts, which are still kept ecologically untouched. Throughout our history we have had governmental regime and ideology changes, but since 1990 we have become a democratic country with free economy and parliamentary governance. The majority of the people are Buddhists and a small percentage of the people are shamanists, which is the ancient nomadic religious tradition. Since 1990, Mongolia has opened politically and economically, and pluralist views spread, and because of it we had many religious organizations come into the country. Because of it, even though Mongolia is a country of small population, we can say, it is a country with many different religious organizations.

In 1990, since the democratic revolution was successful in Mongolia, we put a stop to discrimination of any of our people because of their ideology and religion, human rights and liberty have been guaranteed in the legal framework.

In our new constitution: It is stated in our constitution, "The state will respect religion, and religion will honor the state" and issues of the relationship between religion and the state

are regulated according to the laws, such as “constitution of Mongolia”, (1992), “the law on the relationship between the state and religions” (1993), “Guidance on National Security” (1994), “National Security law”. These laws and concepts have directed our democratic government’s tendency about religion.

In the constitution of Mongolia, it is stated that, “No one is to be discriminated against because of his or her religion”, also “ a citizen of Mongolia has every right to worship or not worship, and even in an emergency situation or wartime, a person’s right to worship or not to worship may not be restricted by law”.

In addition to legalizing one’s right to worship or not worship, in “Guidance on National Security”, influencing factors which could affect the national security were classified into two categories: external and internal. As it is stated in article 2, section 22: one of the internal influencing factors that could affect national security is “when there is a conflict and/or violence because of one’s religion or nationality” and considered the national security more than any religion.

In 1993, the law on the relationship between the state and religions was enacted. Many changes to the religious environment in our country that have occurred over the past 17 years, are requiring adjustments and a renewal to the regulations regarding religious freedom. Our country must deal with the problems of creating a new and more refined regulating law for religious issues, and creating a regulatory framework within the government organization for regulating the relationships among religions. From a modern point of view, there are many things that don’t support the lifestyle and development progress. A parliamentary committee has been formed and is working with religious and government leaders to come to a consensus on how to renew the law.

In the 8th article of the “Guidance on National Security”, the “Mongolian cultural security” section states “Respecting the freedom to worship or not to worship, not invading in the internal affairs of any religion, let them do their affairs according to their ordinance”, “giving

special attention to the relationship between religions, preventing from any encounter or conflict. To make sure any religious activities are held according to the law, not causing any harm to the culture." This is prescribed as one of the ways to keep cultural security. The law on the relations between the states and religion has enforced the constitution of Mongolia, the freedom to worship and not to worship. In this law:

1. To worship or not worship any religion is based on one's belief.
2. It is forbidden to force a person to worship or not to worship, and to limit their freedom to worship.
3. It is forbidden to discriminate, insult or to organize any dissenting activities against a person because of his/her religion, or his/ her religiousness.
4. Citizens' freedom to worship or not to worship are to be regulated only according to the laws of Mongolia or obligations accepted through Mongolia's agreement to international treaties, regarding the regulation of the freedom, health, and morality of other citizens, as well as the national security and public order.
5. Citizens' religious affiliation is not to be mentioned in official documentations, unless requested by the same citizen. These are the indications of what Mongolian government's policy is when it comes to relations between religions and citizens.

In this era of globalization, it is especially important to constitute policies and regulations about religions from the government, regardless of the country's political, economical view or political governance. In this new century, in these new circumstances, regardless of our religious views, we all live on the same earth, it has become one of the questions that the human race is facing.

This ecological crisis is imminent on the future circumstances of mankind. To the delegates, who are gathered here in this room, let us work together to direct the powerful spiritual influence of religion, which has affected and interested people throughout the history of mankind, to direct this influence to charitable acts and to help the world. Depending on their

cultural uniqueness every religion is different, yet I believe we can be united in our opinions to love humanity. It has become the time, when every religion needs to work together for humanity, where love and charity are scarce.

I want to send an invitation to all of you, influential leaders or religions, laws and political leaders, to lead your people in this charitable act.

Thank you for your attention.