Presentation on Active participation of Mongolia’s older persons in the society by the MAEP’s representative at the ESCAP Subregional meeting in Incheon.

Mr Chairman
Respected Colleagues
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure joining all of you to discuss our common issues on ageing and to exchange our opinions and share the experiences regarding the primary tasks to be needed smart solution.

The Mongolian Association for Elderly People (MAEP) was set up in 1988 in order to expand the activities for protecting the interests of Mongolia’s elderly people at the age of 60 years and over who are on old age pension today. The association also intends to widely involve the elderly in the country’s social, political, economic and cultural lives.

The MAEP as a NGO has contacts and collaborations with the state and government as well as the other relevant bodies being responsible for ageing issues of improving the living conditions of aged people and taking care of their health and nursing services. Besides, it controls over the implementation of laws and regulations concerning the old people passed by the government.

As a rule a person who reaches the age of 55 woman and 60 man is considered as a retiree according to the labour Code being pursued in Mongolia now. However, today people are living longer than before. In particular, one person in 8 is 60 years, but by 2050 the rate will be one person in five. So we must meet the needs of the aged persons who are alive today and plan ahead to meet their needs tomorrow.

It is apparent that retirement ages need to be increased in relation to ageing longer. Therefore, it is requested to provide the elderly who are healthy and capable with an opportunity to continue their work, engage in socially useful labour. Thus young cadres will be able to get a chance to inherit the knowledge and life experiences of their ancestors.

With higher life expectancy older people increasingly want to remain economically active and to make their own contribution to the society.

According to the 2010 population and housing census data one out of 8 is older persons aged 60 ,and over still holds any job and this participation rate
was about 12 percent. Besides, very often mainly men get loans for the employment support fund and run business entities with their family members and near relatives.

The elderly usually make a positive contribution to the household by looking after their descendants and doing housework including meals and cleaning. Grandparents are the best and reliable babysitters. Such a kind of services doing for the sake of their adults and relatives reduce depression of loneliness in old age. Thereby, it helps the family to save on the costs of kindergartens and nurses.

Older people also provide their young children and adults with guidance and good knowledge how to raise, graze cattle and take care of household animal husbandry. Some of the old persons teach their community members how to plant and grow vegetables, fruit trees as well. Some retired teachers work to provide in formal training to school dropouts. In that way old people often express their interests in being employed and contributing their families and community society. These aspirations and initiatives are being warmly welcomed by the government and the other relevant organizations in general.

Old persons receiving pensions can also help to reduce the financial and psychological pressures on their children if they are unemployed and not earning. Also the pensioners are found to suffer less family violence because they have their own money contributing to the household income.

In Mongolia the main sources of income for aged people are their own employment earnings, family support and pensions paid out from the social insurance and social welfare funds.

Employment opportunities are available for the elderly in the rural areas such as agriculture, cattle breeding, small trading, manufacturing services and mining. At the same time intergenerational bonds are strong in Mongolia. More than 80 percent of aged people in the countryside are living in extended families together with children and grandchildren. Thus, they are getting materialistic and spiritual support from those family members

Unfortunately this kind of family value of helping the elderly has been lost steadily due to internal and external migration which is intensifying among the youth for last several years. Aged people in rural areas stayed on to care for livestock while younger people migrated to urban places to study, work or get market opportunities.

However, a number of the old people are living in poverty due to inadequate family incomes and livelihood capabilities which resulted from the low socio-economic development in our country.
By the latest national statistical office data 36 percent of the total population is living below the poverty line and there are many families with older persons among the poor.

Therefore, the state and government see utmost important to encourage the retired people to be actively involved in social life and to give them an opportunity and to increase their incomes through employment and to create for them healthy and favourable environment.

For this purpose of solving the urgent tasks on ageing, in 1988 the government approved the National Programme on Health and Social Protection of the Elderly estimated up to 2030 in line with the Macao Plan of Action on Ageing for Asia and Pacific. A number of measures were undertaken within the framework of this programme. As a result the capacity of organizations dealing with the old population at the national and local levels was considerably strengthened. Then the program was revised in the light of the MIPAA and Shanghai Implementation Strategy and re-approved as the national programme on Health and Social Welfare of the Elderly (2004-2008).

Subsequently the government of Mongolia endorsed the National Strategy on Ageing in 2009 to be in force till 2030 which addresses key elderly-related welfare issues and encourages a multi-sectoral response to ageing.

In addition the Health Sector Master Plan (2006-2015) and Social Security Master Plan (2004-2013) govern policies and programmes focusing on older Mongolians.

The government has introduced measures on supporting employment of old persons, enhancing quality of living conditions, ensuring active participation in socially useful activities as a means of income security for those who are able to be employed.

One of our significant goals in this era where the interconnection in the world becomes stronger get world commonwealth assistance in the development of Mongolia and use them more appropriately.

We are sure that your ideas, comments, lively and productive discussions of strategic policies and programmes concerning ageing issues will be utmost important for implementing the National Strategy on Ageing into life.

Thank you.