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General and complete disarmament

Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains an account of new developments and the assistance accorded to Mongolia by the Secretariat and relevant United Nations bodies, as reported by Mongolia, the Secretariat and those bodies, since the previous report on this subject ([A/75/204](#)) was issued in July 2020.

During the period under review, Mongolia continued to receive international recognition for its nuclear-weapon-free status and to promote other nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. Mongolia continued to seek further institutionalization of its nuclear-weapon-free status.

The Government and people of Mongolia have received assistance from United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes, including the United Nations Environment Programme and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

* [A/77/150](#).



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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 75/41 on Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status, the General Assembly invited Member States to continue to cooperate with Mongolia in taking the measures necessary to consolidate and strengthen Mongolia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, the inviolability of its borders, its independent foreign policy, its economic security and its ecological balance, as well as its nuclear-weapon-free status. The Assembly also appealed to the Member States of the Asia-Pacific region to support Mongolia's efforts to join the relevant regional security and economic arrangements. The Assembly further requested the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations bodies to continue to provide assistance to Mongolia in taking the aforementioned necessary measures and requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its seventy-seventh session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request and is based on the information concerning the implementation of the resolution received to date from Mongolia, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

II. Activities related to Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status

3. The present section reflects the information provided by Mongolia concerning the activities related to its international security and nuclear-weapon-free status during the reporting period.

4. Mongolia has made considerable efforts to strengthen international peace and security and has achieved success in the past 30 years since it declared its territory a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

5. Mongolia has deployed nearly 20,000 blue helmets to 13 United Nations peacekeeping operations on three different continents since 2002. It ranks high globally in terms of per capita deployment of peacekeepers and the number of military personnel.

6. Mongolia initiated and successfully promoted the adoption by the General Assembly of the resolutions on peoples' rights to peace, disarmament week, education for all, cooperatives, rural women, the rights of landlocked developing countries, promoting democratic reforms, and education for democracy.

7. The year 2022 marks the thirtieth anniversary of Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status. Mongolia has continued its efforts to institutionalize its status and secure appropriate assurances from the nuclear-weapon States.

8. The General Assembly has considered the issue related to Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status and adopted resolutions thereon biennially since 1998.

9. While reiterating its firm commitment to the nuclear-weapon-free world and supporting every international community effort, Mongolia officially joined the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and has been legally bound by it since 10 March 2022.

10. The present report contains activities undertaken over the past two years to implement General Assembly resolution 75/41.

11. Since the issuance in July 2020 of the previous report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 73/44, the Government of Mongolia has continued its efforts to strengthen its national security and promote further the implementation of the resolution at the international and regional levels.

A. Measures taken at the international level

12. The parliament of Mongolia adopted a draft law to accede to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 22 October 2021. Mongolia deposited its instrument of accession with the Secretary-General on 10 December 2021. Mongolia has been legally bound by the Treaty since 10 March 2022 and was the fifty-seventh State to ratify or accede to it. Joining the Treaty strengthens Mongolia's position on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and meets the fundamental interests of its national security.

13. Mongolia served as the coordinator of the fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia from May 2018 to April 2022. The fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia was initially planned to take place on 24 April 2020, according to resolution 73/71. However, the General Assembly decided to postpone it to a later date to be decided by the Assembly at its seventy-sixth session owing to the situation related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

14. Despite the postponement during the reporting period of many global and regional activities due to the pandemic, Mongolia participated virtually in various international activities, including events held by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and built its capacity to implement its safeguards obligations.

B. Measures taken at the regional level

15. Since 2014, Mongolia has been organizing the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security, an international conference that aims to establish an effective dialogue mechanism in the region. Although the conference was suspended in 2020 and 2021 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mongolia hosted the seventh Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on 23 and 24 June 2022 in Ulaanbaatar. The United Nations Secretariat and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization will participate in the conferences at a senior official level.

16. Mongolia participated in the Conference of the Parties to the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material at IAEA headquarters in Vienna from 28 March to 1 April 2022. This conference was the first to review the implementation of the Convention as amended. Representatives of 106 parties to the Amendment to the Convention participated in the Conference. In addition, 17 States parties to the Convention but not to the Amendment, including Mongolia, participated as observers. Seven States not party to the Convention attended the Conference as observers. During the conference, delegations of the parties to the Amendment to the Convention shared their experiences in implementing the Amendment, including steps taken to ensure the physical protection of nuclear facilities and nuclear material, efforts taken to increase international cooperation, and actions implemented to criminalize offences involving nuclear material or facilities.

C. Measures taken at the national level

17. The Executive Office of the Nuclear Energy Commission is the State authority responsible for safeguards implementation in Mongolia. The Commission implements the national-level regulatory control of safeguards through establishing and maintaining a system of accounting for and control of nuclear material, providing IAEA with specified information concerning nuclear material, facilities, locations outside facilities, and activities, and providing access to IAEA for purposes of inspections and design information verification. The Commission cooperates with IAEA to implement safeguards and develop the necessary legal and regulatory infrastructure for securities and to strengthen the State System of Accounting for and Control of Nuclear Material.

18. The Executive Office of the Nuclear Energy Commission is responsible for submitting the additional protocol declarations of Mongolia and collecting all relevant information from the relevant organizations under the scope of the additional protocol.

19. Mongolia provides information on a broader range of nuclear fuel cycle material or activities. That includes: fuel cycle research and development not involving nuclear material; movements in all buildings on a site; nuclear-related manufacturing activities; capacities of uranium mines and concentration plants and thorium concentration plants; holdings of source material not suitable for enrichment or fuel fabrication, whether in nuclear or non-nuclear use; imports/exports; nuclear material exempted from safeguards for non-nuclear purposes or waste containing nuclear material for which securities have been terminated; exports and imports of specially designed equipment and non-nuclear material; and its 10-year nuclear fuel cycle development plan.

20. As part of efforts to improve the legal framework, the Commission developed the regulation on nuclear material accountancy control, which was approved by Government resolution No. 229, dated 23 December 2020.

21. Physical protection of nuclear materials used for peaceful purposes plays a vital role in supporting global nuclear non-proliferation and counter-terrorism objectives. Aware of the importance of physical protection, Mongolia, a State with limited quantities of nuclear material, is preparing to join the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

22. In 2015, the parliament of Mongolia approved resolution No. 60 on strengthening the country's nuclear-weapon-free status. Article 3 of the resolution stipulates that the Government should join the following conventions and protocols: the Convention on Nuclear Safety (1994); the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management (1997); the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material; and the Modified Small Quantities Protocols. Mongolia is preparing to join the above-mentioned international conventions and protocols and cooperates and works together with the relevant government agencies in this area.

23. Moreover, on 30 June 2021, the Government of Mongolia submitted a draft law on cybersecurity and supplementary draft laws to the State Great Khural (or the parliament). On 17 December 2021, the State Great Khural approved the draft law on cybersecurity at its plenary session.

III. Non-nuclear aspects of Mongolia's international security

24. The present section is based on the information received to date from Mongolia on measures taken during the reporting period to promote non-nuclear aspects of security, as they constitute an integral part of Mongolia's national security concept.

A. Economic security

25. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and with a view to supporting Mongolia, the International Monetary Fund approved in June 2020 a request for emergency financial assistance under the Rapid Financing Facility, enabling the Government to meet urgent budget and balance of payments needs. Owing to the COVID-19 crisis and supply chain disruptions, Mongolia's economy contracted by 4.4 per cent in 2020. A successful vaccination campaign in 2021 contributed to 1.4 per cent growth. However, growth forecasts for 2022 remain modest as the landlocked country's economy remains vulnerable to external shocks, such as border closures affecting exports and the repercussions of the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine.

26. The Government of Mongolia has implemented several important policies and programmes to support specific sectors of the economy. The parliament of Mongolia adopted the Vision 2050 policy, which is built on the Sustainable Development Goals and sets a long-term development path. In December 2021, the parliament also adopted the New Revival policy, a 10-year plan to strengthen its economic independence and mitigate the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical instability. The policy prioritizes the following six areas: border ports, energy, industrialization, urban and rural areas, green development and government effectiveness.

27. Facilitating trade and transit transportation continues to be high on the agenda of the Government of Mongolia. The Government is expanding efforts to develop dry ports in Mongolia. In April 2022, the parliament of Mongolia approved the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific.

28. The President of Mongolia, Ukhnaa Khurelsukh, put forward the Transit Mongolia initiative, reflected in the Government's action plan for the period 2020-2024, to develop infrastructure and transit capacities. With the support of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Mongolia, China and the Russian Federation signed in 2016 the Intergovernmental Agreement on International Road Transport along the Asian Highway Network. The Agreement helped to activate the transportation sector among the countries, which had slowed down owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. To increase the volume of its export commodities, Mongolia is generating new railway projects through various financial models.

29. Under the Economic Corridor Programme, agreed in 2016 and aimed at improving trade and transit traffic, Mongolia, China and the Russian Federation have prioritized enhancing the central railroad corridor, increasing traffic among Asian highway networks AH3 and AH4.

30. At the beginning of 2022, Gazprom completed a preliminary joint feasibility study to construct a gas pipeline through the territory of Mongolia to supply gas from the Russian Federation to China.

31. The World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Trade Facilitation, which contains provisions for the expedited movement, release and clearance of goods across borders, including goods in transit, is expected to significantly reduce trade costs for landlocked countries. Therefore, Mongolia is making active efforts to

implement the Agreement and, as of today, its implementation rate is 79.8 per cent. In cooperation with the World Bank Group, Mongolia implemented the Mongolia Trade Information Portal project, which was launched on 11 December 2020. Preparatory work is also under way to establish a single-window system under the Asian Development Bank Regional Improvement of Border Services project. Within the project framework, the construction, facilities and equipment of Altanbulag, Bichigt and Zamyn-Uud border checkpoints are being renovated and improved.

32. Mongolia attaches great importance to the implementation of the road map for accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, which provides a comprehensive map of activities and responsibilities of international and regional organizations in seven priority areas related to landlocked developing countries, including transit, trade and transport facilitation, energy and information and communications technology, structural economic transformation, cooperation between landlocked developing countries and transit countries, means of implementation and international support, COVID-19 and other areas. In that regard, Mongolia joined the inaugural meeting of the Landlocked Developing Countries National Focal Points Network held on 15 and 16 June 2022 at the International Trade Centre in Geneva, allowing it to exchange best practices on the implementation and follow-up of the road map.

33. On behalf of the landlocked developing countries, Mongolia submitted the landlocked developing countries ministerial declaration to WTO. The declaration was adopted by the WTO Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries on 4 November 2021 as a document for the twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference. The declaration includes a commitment to revitalize the work of the Group in Geneva, to meet regularly, to exchange experiences and to seek increased support, including capacity-building for landlocked developing countries, in critical areas of WTO work.

34. Mongolia is implementing projects to facilitate regional trade and infrastructure development through mechanisms such as the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Programme and the Greater Tumen Initiative.

35. Mongolia regards renewable energy as a critical resource for its development and aims to achieve 30 per cent of its total energy production from renewable energy sources by 2030. In the light of the significant potential to supply renewable energy-based resources to regional countries, Mongolia seeks to implement the north-east Asia supergrid project.

36. Actively participating in economic and trade integration in the Asia-Pacific region and expanding business and economic cooperation with its main trading partners is the goal of Vision 2050, Mongolia's long-term development policy. In connection with the plan, on 1 January 2021 Mongolia began to implement the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement, which had been ratified in December 2019 by the parliament. The Agreement's member countries account for about 70 per cent of Mongolia's total foreign trade turnover, 90 per cent of exports and more than 30 per cent of imports.

37. Since the Agreement for an Economic Partnership between Japan and Mongolia came into force in 2016, imports to Mongolia from Japan have been steadily increasing, while exports from Mongolia to Japan fluctuated and did not show any particular trend. More work is needed to increase the degree of utilization of the Agreement by Mongolian companies. Mongolia is also exploring the possibility of concluding free trade agreements with the Eurasian Economic Union and the Republic of Korea.

B. Human security

38. In its national security concept, Mongolia identifies human security as one of the fundamental pillars of the country's national security. Creating a healthy and safe living environment and conditions, ensuring food security, guaranteeing security of residence and living environment and protecting persons from becoming victims of crime and assault are defined as the basis for ensuring human security.

39. The parliament of Mongolia adopted a new law, the law on the legal status of human rights defenders, on 1 April 2021, making it the first country in Asia to provide a framework of protection for people who speak out on human rights concerns and violations. The law entered into force on 1 July 2021. The law on the legal status of human rights defenders is the result of a years-long collective effort by the Government of Mongolia, civil society and the Human Rights Council, in cooperation with the United Nations presence in Mongolia. The new law means that human rights defenders in the country are now legally protected, and there is a legal framework for their rights to be respected, promoted and fulfilled.

40. Mongolia is a source and destination country for men, women and children subjected to trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation and forced labour. Official police statistics indicate that 350 individuals were identified as victims within Mongolia and abroad from 2012 to 2022. At least 70 per cent of the victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation assisted in Mongolia are girls and women who were lured into sex trafficking while attempting to better their lives and social status.

41. It was with this background in mind that, on 5 March 2021, the International Organization for Migration, in partnership with the Coordination Council of Crimes Prevention of Mongolia, launched "Dream Umbrella", a public information campaign in Mongolia to raise awareness among young women on what human trafficking entails, where to report the crime or access reliable and trustworthy information, and how to refer a case to the authorities or seek help.

42. Mongolia has joined eight out of nine core human rights treaties. It has not joined the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. The country cooperates with the human rights mechanisms and bodies. It has accepted 170 out of 190 universal periodic review recommendations (third cycle, March 2021) and 90 per cent of recommendations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and has prepared action plans to implement these recommendations with United Nations support. The country is taking steps to strengthen the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia and has established a national mechanism defining the role of the Commission in torture prevention. The mechanism, however, is not yet fully operational. Mongolia abolished the death penalty in 2015, a step that earned the country global praise. Based on the universal periodic review recommendations, the country is working to develop a national action plan to implement the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Furthermore, Mongolia supported the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in 2018. The country has also enacted laws and set up institutional mechanisms to implement child rights within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including on horse racing, domestic violence, education of children with disabilities and corporal punishment.

43. However, human rights concerns remain, relating mainly to violence against women, discriminatory attitudes, marginalization of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities and older persons, significant cases of abuse, violence against children and violations of human rights linked to environmental degradation. Mongolia suffers from heavy air, soil and water pollution in its urban areas. During

the long cold season, air pollution levels in Ulaanbaatar are among the highest in the world, jeopardizing the right to safe drinking water, health and an adequate standard of living. Although freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are guaranteed against interference and restrictions by the Government, specific civil society actions and peaceful demonstrations are interrupted by police actions. There has also been the issue of pushback in the civic space, including the digital civic space, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

C. Environmental security

44. During the pandemic lockdown, Mongolia witnessed signs of temporary self-recovery in relation to the ozone layer, reduction of air pollution, purification of rivers and waters and revival of the fauna and flora.

45. Desertification is threatening the livelihoods of more than 2 billion people worldwide, and sandstorms originating from Mongolia are becoming a significant problem for the region.

46. Approximately 78 per cent of the territory of Mongolia is affected by desertification or land degradation to a certain degree. The main reasons are a 2.2°C increase in mean temperature and a 7 per cent decline in annual precipitation over the past 80-plus years.

47. To contribute to the global fight against climate change, Mr. Khurelsukh announced, from the General Assembly podium in September 2021, a campaign to plant billions of trees by 2030.

D. Conclusion

48. The report of the Government of Mongolia on its activities undertaken in the implementation of General Assembly resolution [75/41](#) demonstrates the country's determination to fully implement the provisions of the resolution at the national and international levels.

49. Mongolia continues to work to promote acceptance of its status at three levels: with national Governments, in the region and with the international community. Previously, Mongolia maintained a focus on national Governments and international forums, but these efforts will shift to its immediate region upon official recognition of its status by the General Assembly. Mongolia will cooperate with nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States to promote a world free of nuclear weapons.

IV. Assistance provided by United Nations entities

50. The present section is based on the information received to date from UNEP and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States concerning their respective assistance activities during the reporting period.

A. United Nations Environment Programme

[Original: English]
[1 April 2022]

51. UNEP supports Mongolia and other countries through the global project entitled "Aligning the financial system and infrastructure investments with sustainable

development: a transformational approach”. UNEP is working with the Ministry of Economy and Development (formerly the National Development Agency) to examine the environmental, social and economic impacts of planned transportation infrastructure in the Khangai region and to identify policy and investment options for improving the sustainability of infrastructure in the sector. The project began in January 2021 and was to end in June 2022.

52. Mongolia’s Golomt Bank launched its first report addressing the UNEP Finance Initiative-supported Principles for Responsible Banking in April 2021. Its *Sustainable Development Report 2020* was launched in April 2021. The report includes the Bank’s support for environmentally friendly business, social responsibility, education and health, cultural heritage protection, green loans, gender equality and customer satisfaction and safety.

53. UNEP is supporting the management of peatlands and enhancing the resilience of pastoral ecosystems and livelihoods of nomadic herders in Mongolia and globally through a project that aims to develop the capacity for enhancing ecosystem services of peatlands in Mongolia and the capacity of indigenous reindeer herders to reduce land degradation and improve the provision of ecosystem services and increase community resilience. The main premise of the project is that, in order to sustain ecosystem services of peatlands and reduce land degradation, sustainable peatland management must be mainstreamed into policy frameworks and sectoral policies, and nomadic herders’ capacity to contribute to sustainable land management must be strengthened. That is supported by generating knowledge and managing data on peatlands so that sustainable peatland management activities can be adequately implemented, reported and monitored. The capacities of nomadic herder communities will be enhanced so that these communities can participate in rangeland management processes and to ensure that indigenous knowledge becomes part of sustainable landscape management approaches. Cross-community exchanges at the global level will further facilitate the dissemination of the project’s good practices and lessons learned from the contribution of herders to sustainable landscape management globally, making it possible to replicate best practices at the global level. The project will generate global environmental benefits by bringing 20,000 ha of land under sustainable management, sequestering 600,000 tons of CO₂eq and directly targeting 14,000 beneficiaries. The project began in June 2020 and ends in December 2025.

54. UNEP supports the PlanetGOLD programme through its work with various stakeholders along the gold supply chain in Mongolia to sustainably improve artisanal mining operations as an important livelihood opportunity for remote communities and to support the revision of regulations governing the sector. In partnership with the national Government, the project team is working to create an enabling environment for a formalized artisanal mining sector that enhances community development, improves productivity and eliminates the use of mercury. The project organizes training for miners in collaboration with the Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining National Federation in target provinces (Selenge, Khovd, Gobi/Altai). The training covered responsible practices, environmental responsibility and rehabilitation in artisanal mining, occupational health and safety, business and financial management, due diligence, gender and human rights. The project began in December 2018 and ends in April 2024.

55. Building the Capacity to Advance the National Adaptation Plan Process in Mongolia aims to reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change by building adaptive capacity and resilience and by facilitating the integration of climate change adaptation, in a coherent manner, into relevant new and existing policies, programmes and activities, in particular development planning processes and strategies, within all relevant sectors and at different levels, as appropriate. The project plans to deliver the final national adaptation plan for the country in 2022.

56. UNEP has appointed a staff member as Mongolia United Nations country team focal point to strengthen environmental advisory support to the Resident Coordinator and the United Nations country team, drawing on expertise from across UNEP.

B. Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

[Original: English]
[6 April 2022]

Mongolia: one of the landlocked developing countries affected by the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

57. Mongolia is part of the group of 32 officially recognized landlocked developing countries that face a wide array of development challenges due to a lack of direct territorial access to the sea. These countries are characterized by structural and geographic vulnerabilities, including remoteness and isolation from world markets, additional border crossings, cumbersome transit procedures, inefficient logistics systems and poor infrastructure, which cause them to incur substantially higher transport costs compared with coastal countries.

58. Over the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified pre-existing vulnerabilities of landlocked developing countries. Challenges such as mobility and trade restrictions imposed by transit countries, problems at borders, lockdowns, disruptions in global supply chains and commodity price shocks have affected, and are still hampering, the socioeconomic development of landlocked developing countries and their ability to sustainably recover.

59. Taken together, the COVID-19 pandemic and the structural and geographic vulnerabilities of landlocked developing countries also affect these countries' capacity to achieve the objectives of the Vienna Programme of Action for landlocked developing countries and to make substantial progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mongolia's economy in the context of the pandemic

60. Mongolia is highly reliant on its two immediate neighbours for trade: China, its main partner for exports; and the Russian Federation and China, its main import partners. The country ascended to upper-middle-income country status with a growth rate stabilizing at 6.5 per cent in 2018, and has achieved a high human development category.¹

61. Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, Mongolia was successful at both preventing infection and responding to the pandemic and had no community transmission until mid-November 2020. However, the number of COVID-19 cases surged after mid-November of that year. As at 4 February 2022, the country had 446,788 confirmed cases and 2,043 deaths.²

62. In response to domestic COVID-19 transmission, Mongolia imposed prevention and response measures and a complete ban on all border crossings in 2020.³ Those measures had major detrimental consequences on the country's economic activity. For

¹ See <https://mongolia.un.org/en/about/about-the-un>.

² See <https://covid19.who.int/region/wpro/country/mn>.

³ See https://mongolia.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/2017-2020_%20UN%20Country%20Results%20Report%20Mongolia_ENG_final.pdf and <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/35161>.

example, the impact of the country's lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the decrease in growth of other industrial and services areas. As a result, the Mongolian economy contracted by 7.3 per cent in the first nine months of 2020, one of the worst contractions since the 1990s.⁴

63. During that period, the largest decline in economic growth was linked to a contraction in coal and crude oil exports, which accounted for 45 per cent of total exports in 2019, due to weaker demand from China, and a temporary ban on exports in February–March 2020. Copper exports, which accounted for 24 per cent of total exports in 2019, also contracted significantly owing to border closures with China and a sharp fall in prices as the COVID-19 shock suppressed global demand.⁵

64. Imports of goods and services further contracted in 2020, falling by 8 per cent from January to September 2020, compared with an expansion of 23.2 per cent a year before, owing partly to weaker demand for transportation services following travel restrictions and limited truck activities and to a reduction in overseas tourism.⁶

65. Mongolia's economic growth started to rebound at the end of 2020, driven by increasing commodity prices, the easing of COVID-19 preventive measures, an initiative from the Government to boost exports, and a surge in private investment, mainly in the mining sector.⁷ That economic rebound largely dissipated in the second quarter of 2021 owing to the mobility restrictions in May 2021 and disruptions in the supply of imported inputs and commodity exports.⁸ It was expected that, as the pandemic risks faded and the global recovery strengthened, Mongolia's economic growth would recover and accelerate in 2022, driven by favourable terms of trade and higher export demand.⁹

66. However, according to the World Bank,¹⁰ the war in Ukraine threatens the recovery of East Asia and Pacific countries from the COVID-19 shock. For example, restrictive measures on airspace, contractor uncertainty and security concerns are complicating all trade routes going through the Russian Federation and Ukraine.¹¹ That affects Mongolia, which is a large importer of fuel from the Russian Federation.

67. The World Bank notes that, as a result of the war, Mongolia is already seeing a decline in real incomes and is susceptible to global financial and growth shocks due to its large debt.¹² Nevertheless, the Asian Development Bank forecasts that Mongolia's economic growth in 2022 will still be moderately higher than in 2021 and will pick up in 2023.¹³

Climate change as another factor that increases Mongolia's vulnerabilities

68. Mongolia is also suffering from the impacts of climate change, which further increases its vulnerabilities. Between 1940 and 2015, the country has experienced a warming of over 2°C and declines in rainfall. That has led to chronic drought and increased exposure to secondary impacts, such as dust storms. Forecasts indicate that, on the highest future emissions pathway, average warming could exceed 5°C by the

⁴ See <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/35161>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ See www.worldbank.org/en/country/mongolia/overview#1.

⁹ See www.adb.org/news/mongolia-growth-gradually-recover-2021-adb.

¹⁰ See www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/04/04/east-asia-and-pacific-economic-recovery-faces-risks-from-the-war-in-ukraine-us-monetary-tightening-and-china-slowdown.

¹¹ See https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/osginf2022d1_en.pdf.

¹² See www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/04/04/east-asia-and-pacific-economic-recovery-faces-risks-from-the-war-in-ukraine-us-monetary-tightening-and-china-slowdown.

¹³ See www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/784041/ado2022.pdf.

end of the century, which would intensify extreme climate-driven hazards, such as heat waves, droughts and river floods, and threaten Mongolia's food security by placing additional pressure on agricultural crops, particularly wheat.¹⁴ In order to respond to the impact of climate change and address desertification, a major issue for Mongolia, the Government launched a campaign in 2021 to plant billions of trees by 2030 and is considering climate change and desertification as key priority areas.¹⁵

The Office's support to and cooperation with Mongolia

69. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States supports Mongolia and the 31 other landlocked developing countries by raising international awareness on the needs and challenges of these countries, by mobilizing international support and by coordinating United Nations system response.

70. In this role, the Office has continued to provide support to the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries, hosted by the Government of Mongolia in Ulaanbaatar. The Think Tank provides a centre of excellence for high-quality research and policy advice to contribute to the sharing of experiences and capacity strengthening for landlocked developing countries. The Office has been actively advocating for the ratification of the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries, which entered into force on 6 October 2017, after 10 landlocked developing countries ratified it.

71. The Office was granted observer status in the Board of Governors of the Think Tank in July 2019. In November 2020, the Office, on behalf of the United Nations, signed a memorandum of understanding with the Think Tank to forge greater work collaboration towards the full implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

V. Conclusion

72. As described in the present report, various United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes have provided assistance to Mongolia in addressing the developmental, ecological, economic, humanitarian and human security aspects of its international security. The Secretary-General hopes that the assistance provided by the United Nations will further contribute to consolidating the nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia and achieving sustainable development and balanced growth.

¹⁴ See www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/709901/climate-risk-country-profile-mongolia.pdf.

¹⁵ See A/76/PV.7.