

STATEMENT BY VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE STATE GREAT KHURAL OF MONGOLIA YA. SANJMYATAV AT THE GENERAL DEBATE /St. Petersburg, October 17, 2017/

Dear Mr. President,

Dear President of the Assembly

Honourable Members,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I'd like to extend my gratitude for Russian Federation, mayors and residents of this beautiful city St. Petersburg for hosting 137<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly. Russian Federation and Mongolia are forever neighbours as well as strategic partner-countries with traditionally good relations. Our cooperation has wide potentials to be broadened covering many sectors.

I believe that it is timely to hold the discussion under the theme of the general debate "Promoting cultural pluralism and peace through inter-faith and inter-ethnic dialogue".

At present, confrontation within and among the states basically arises from the inter-faith and inter-ethnic disputes, and this makes all of us feel worried. We, parliamentarians, must carefully and in a comprehensive manner discuss how inter-faith dialogues will create cultural pluralism and maintain a piece.

It is my pleasure to inform that the protection of the basic rights of the national minority and the respect to their traditional religion and culture are the essential parts of our country's policy. Therefore, Mongolia will promote any initiatives towards conducting inter-faith and inter-ethnic dialogues.

In recent years, we are hearing a lot about how the war caused by the local confrontations among the state itself affects ordinary civilians and violates their inherent right to life. It is becoming clearer that the destiny of the millions of people leaving their home countries and scraping abroad as immigrants because of the war is connected with the diversities in the religion and cultures. Such a situation creates a humanitarian crisis in many parts of the world and poses a huge risk of human life at an unprecedented level.

Therefore, it is important for religious and cultural activists always to look out for holding talks and dialogues on peace and harmony. Involving academics, civil society and state institutions, including representatives of the IPU to the talks and dialogues, will be of great significance to the international community's efforts to inform and make the public understand correctly about many facing challenges and to coordinate the humanitarian crisis.

In addition, it is becoming important to protect from persecution, discrimination the people affected by long-term war, to make the migrants return back on a voluntary basis and resettle in their home place. In order to strengthen the solidarity against any aggregation to be committed in the name of religion and promote the cultural and religious diversities, it is also important to hold a dialogue based on mutual understanding and cooperation.

Mongolia has sincerely condemned the intended destruction of religious and cultural heritages such as monasteries, monuments, and museums, and will continue to do so. And we urge other countries to support any efforts aimed at effective conservation of these cultural treasures.

We have in Mongolia a proverb saying “there would be no mistake if we will discuss the things jointly” which equals to the meaning of English “two heads are better than one”. Thus, we are confident that the right path would be found through discussions of the issues under the theme from the different angles.

Dear Parliamentarians,

In 2017, Mongolia is marking the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of membership to the IPU. We would like to express our will to continue to keep our active participation in the activities of this organization, which is the real platform to exchange our ideas and experiences.

I would like to wish the success to the Assembly.

Thank you for your attention.