To: UNESCO - SECTION OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (CLT/CEH/ITH)

From: MR. N.BOLD, HEAD OF THE ARTS AND CULTURAL POLICY DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CULTURE, SCIENCE AND SPORTS OF MONGOLIA

Dear Secretariat,

Mongolia, as State Party to the UNESCO’s ICH Convention, considering the Draft Decision 12.Com 11.a3 of the Committee concerning the Nomination of Mongolia titled as “Mongolian traditional practices of worshipping the sacred sites” (No.000871) takes note on the inscription option “if the Committee is satisfied that the information considered as missing by the Evaluation Body has been provided by the submitting State at the present Session”, and is submitting the element’s description and viability in the inventory as well as some evidences of the communities involvement in the inventorying process.

The following link provides the data and information requested on the decision (US), extracted from the Registration and Information State Database of cultural heritage at the Center of Cultural Heritage, Mongolia.

http://monheritage.mn/mn/Intangible/Content.aspx?ContentID=8

The Center of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Sports maintains the National Representative List of ICH and the National List of ICH in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, and conducts the inventorying, documentation, and safeguarding measures to the ICH elements and its practitioners. All the gathered data from state inventorying, registration and documentation of ICH elements and its practitioners (such as audio and video recordings, photographs, descriptions, viability of safeguarding measures, risks, threats related to the ICH) are being kept in the Registration and Information State Database of Cultural Heritage, and being used for the research studies and safeguarding measures. On the website, some part of the information extracted from the general database, for instance, the list of ICH elements listed on aforementioned 2 national lists, and its practitioner's information, some report of inventorying being used and updated.

State Party is providing to the Committee with the extracts from this separate folder showing the process of recording concerning the element and also the materials related the involvements of communities and NGO’s concerned in the updating processes of Inventory.

Please accept this additional information to the Draft Decision connected to Nomination file, and introduce to the Members of the Committee. The inscription of the “Mongolian traditional practices of worshipping the sacred sites” to the UNESCO List of Intangible
Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding will be a huge trigger to safeguard this heritage element within the community, and nation, and worldwide for the future.

HEAD OF THE ARTS AND CULTURAL POLICY DEPARTMENT
OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
CULTURE, SCIENCE AND SPORTS OF MONGOLIA
N.BOLD
МОНГОЛ УЛСЫН
БОЛОВСРОЛ, СОЁЛ, ШИНЖЛЭХ
УХААН, СПОРТЫН ЯАМ
14200 Улсынбаатарт хот, Судебийн дугаар,
Бага тойрог 44, Засгийн газрын III байр,
Улаанбаатар, 26-22-27, Факс: (976-11) 323589
E-mail info@macaa.gov.mn, http://www.macaa.gov.mn

2017.11.15
танилц ээс № 20818

Мадэээлэл хүргүүлэх тухай

Монгол Улс нь ЮНЕСКО-ийн Соёлын биец бүс өвийг хамгаалах тухай
Конвенцийн Гишүүн улсын хувьд 2017 онд ЮНЕСКО-ийн Яаралтай хамгаалах
шаардлагатай Соёлын биец бүс өвийг жагсаалтад "Уул овоо такхи Монгол заан уул"
(No.000871) -ийг бүртгүүлээхээр нэр давчиллүүлсэн ээс холбогдолтой Хороноос гаргасан
Урьдчилсан шийдвэр (12.Com 11.a3)-тай танилцах, 12 дугаар чуулганын агуулга
бүгдийг байгааг аянхаралдаа авч (Үндэсний багийн зүгээр шаардсан мэдээллүүг
Оролцох улс энэ удаагийн чуулганын Хорононд хүргүүлэн өгсөн улсын
хэлэлцүүлэгт хэмээн узэж, бүртгэх) өвийн тодорхойллох, бүртгэл тооллогын
үр дүн, болон хам бүгдийн
энхээр бүртгэл тооллогод оролцоон оролцоог батлан харуулах холбогдох мэдээллүүг
бэлтгэлээ.

Урьдчилсан шийдвэр шаардсан U5 ээсгийн тодрууллын хариуг тухайн өвийн
холбогдолтой бүртгэл тооллогын явц, хам бүгдүү болон төрийн бүс байгууллагуудын
бүртгэл тооллогыг шинчилээхэд оролцооны оролцоог харууласан батаалга
мэдээллүүг Соёлын өвийн төрдээ Соёлын өвийн улсын нэгдсэн бүртгэл мэдээллүүг сангаас
гаргаж, хавсралтаар болон Соёлын өвийн төрийн эзэн сэсэгээр дээрх дараах холбоо
Монгол Улсав Хорононд хүргүүлж байна.

http://monheritage.mn/mn/Intangible/Content.aspx?ContentId=8

Боловсrol, Соёл, Шинжлэх Ухаан, Спортны Яамны харъяа Соёлын өвийн төв
нээдсэн Төлөөллийн болон Яаралт хамгаалах шаардлагатай Соёлын биец бүс
өвийг жагсаалтыг бүртгэл судалгаан дээр түлгүүрлэн шинчилээхээс гадна, соёлын биец
буц өв, түүний өвлөн уламжлалтны бүртгэл, тоох, баримтжуулал, хамгаалах ажлыг
Монгол улсын хэмжээнд удирдан зохион явуулдаг байгууллага юм. Улс орон давар
зогтом байгууллагдаг улсыг, тооллогын үр дүнүү цуглаж гарсан СБЭО болон төрүүг өвлөн
уламжлалгийн (тухайлбал: дуу, дурс бичэлт, гэрэл зург, өвийн тодорхойллох, хамгаалах
арга хэмжээ, учир ч байгаа эрсдэл гэх мэт) нь СБУНБМС-д хадгалагдаж,
судалгаа болон хамгаалах үйл ажиллагаанаас галчлон хэрэглэгдээд. Хариу тус
энэхүү өрөнхий мэдээллийн сангаас болохын усныг, тухайлбал Үндэсний Төлөөллөгчи болон Яаралтай хамгаалах шаардлагатай Соёл буюу бус бүртгэсэн өвийн бүртгэл болон тэдгээрийг өвлэн уламжлагддаг мэдээлэл, мөн зарим бүртгэл тооцлолын ажлын тайлан мэдээг олж

нийтэд зориулаганд байршуулагдаг болно.

Энэхүү нэмэлт мэдээллийг нэр дэвшүүлсэн өвд холбогдох Урьдчилсан шийдвэрхүүлэн авч, Хорооны гишүүд гишүүдөө гишүүд болон танилуулж өгөө үү. ЮНЕСКО-ийн Яаралтай хамгаалах шаардлагатай Соёл буюу бус бүртгэл өвд өвдөө "Уул овоо тааших Монгол зэн үүл"-ийг бүртгүүлэх нь энэхүү өвийн хам булэт нь хадгалж хамгаалаад зогсох хугаа Монгол ундэстэн, цаашилдан дэлхий нийтэд хамгаалаан үлдээхдөө түлжээ болох юм.
MONGOLIAN TRADITIONAL PRACTICES OF THE WORSHIPPING SACRED SITES

Description: The tradition of worshipping sacred mountains and waters is one of the intangible cultural heritage elements created, developed and practiced by nomadic Mongolians since ancient times, the tradition initially developed and thrived during shamanic period and was later enriched with Buddhist teachings and rituals. This significantly contributed to the preservation of our natural environment and wild life as sacred and pristine. The tradition of worshipping sacred sites has a very specific customs and rituals. There are many intangible cultural heritage elements associated with the worshipping tradition that have been preserved and continue to thrive, such as chanting special sutras, organizing traditional festival and sharing folk knowledge, legends, benedictions, odes, epics, folk songs, folk performing art, and worshipping ritual. People living around and nearby sacred site have a traditional system of Taboo and prohibition that encourages the benevolent and respectful attitude towards nature and sacred sites.

Nomadic Mongols worship and revere the highest, lofty and beautiful places of their local mountains and hills. According to reliable sources, the Khans of Xiongnu Empire, who established the first Statehood in the territory of Mongolia, and later Chinggis Khan all revered the mountains, conducting and practicing them as rituals of state worship.

This traditional knowledge system has been ignored or even prohibited for a certain period of time of the world communist ideology in the 20th centuries. Since 1990, Mongolian national tradition and rituals have started to revive. Mongolians feel inspired with enthusiasm to revitalize this lost tradition of venerating sacred sites and traditional knowledge system and to create national inventories.

Mongolian worship ceremonies of Sacred sites are performed at sacred sites to invoke assistance from deities of nature: in the summer for timely rain and abundant pastures, and in the autumn for protection of humans and livestock from harsh winter. The tradition maintains a variety of forms of ICH, and builds sense of community and solidarity among the people, while strengthening awareness of the importance of protecting the nature and environment.

General order of worshipping ceremony

Mongolian worshipping ceremonies mostly depend upon ancient traditional procedure (order) of worshipping rituals reflecting shamanistic traditions going back long before the rise of the Mongol Empire. From the XVI century onwards, the original shamanistic rituals gave way to Buddhist religion for enriching by its traditions. Therefore, some Buddhist elements of ceremony are also included in the performance order and procedures. We are presenting here a very general order of the worshipping ritual in Mongolia.

- On a specified day, all the participants gather early in the morning at the worship site. Everyone wears their ceremonial clothes and brings offerings to the deities.
- Decorating the Ovoos with khadag (ceremonial scarves) and dartsag (small flags)
Arranging the products for offering (including trapeze-cakes, boiled meat, tea, airag, and milk vodka so on)
- Placing the incense and junipers needles on the in front of Ovoo
- Chanting the worshipping sutra, created especially for this worshipped Mountain
- Consecration of a horse or other animal to the Mountain
- Offering the libation of milk
- Recitation of prayers in reverence and making offerings to the Ovoo (mountain)
- At the end of the worshipping ceremony, a festival Naadam that honored the Sacred Mountain is held far below the mountain.

**Geographical distribution:** As the National Inventories have identified, there are more than 1000 sacred sites in Mongolia. Mountains worshipped by Mongolians can be identified as the following 3 types depending on who worship them.

Mountains worshipped by:

a. The whole Mongolian nation as State worshipped sacred mountains (Burkhan Khaldun, Bogd Khan, Otgontenger mountains etc.)

b. The certain area people of specific cultural landscape;

c. Certain places that certain family worshipped for many generations

Some mountains in Mongolia have been worshipped by some ethnic groups and communities and local people from the ancient times including Bogd-Khan mountain worshipped by Khalkha people in Tuv Province, Otgontenger (Khalkha people) in Zavkhan Province, Burkhan Khaldun (uriankhai, Khalkha, and Buriad people) in Khentii Province, Khan-Khukhii (Durvud and Khalkha people) in Uvs Province, Altan-Khukhii (Myangad ethnic community) in Khovd province, Subraga-Khairkhan (Khalkha people) in Arkhangai Province, Sutai Khairkhan (Khalkha people) in Gobi-Altai Province and Dari (Dariganga people) in Sukhbaatar Province. Currently, these mountains are officially recognized as the State worshipped mountains by the Decree of the President of Mongolia. In addition, there are other major worshipped mountains at the local level including Bulgan, Ikh-Bogd, Khognokhan, Delgerkhangai, Khanbogd, Batkhaan, Delgerkhan, Khangai Ovoo, and Ulziit Khairkhan in different areas of Mongolia. The practice is also found among the Buryat Mongols in the Russian Federation and IMAR of PRC.

**Viability:** Since 1990s, the Government of Mongolia has taken an active policy to revive and promote national culture, customs and traditions. This policy in which worship of sacred site is specified as the intangible cultural heritage provides a favorable condition to revive, reintroduce and promote the tradition of sacred site worship.

In 2016, in the law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage that newly revised and passed by the Parliament where added following articles related to ICH including a sacred mountains and sites:

3.1.6 “Cultural heritage landscape means the cultural space and landscape where tangible and intangible cultural heritage interrelated with natural environment and traditional livelihood”;
11.1.3. The President has the power to announce the cultural heritage properties which could be protected under auspices of the President, and make decision for sacred mountains and waters to be state worshipped sites;

12.1.3 The Parliament shall have the power to take cultural heritage landscape under special state protection and delineate their boundaries on the basis of government submission;

For enhancing a visibility and importance of sacred sites and worshipping rituals in 2015, Mongolian Government has included 6 main sacred mountains of Mongolia on the newly revised and approved National Tentative List for nominating on to World Heritage list. Furthermore, in 2015 World Heritage Committee has inscribed the “Great Burkhan Khaldun and its surrounding sacred landscape” on the World Heritage List (attached a new tentative list of Mongolia).

Measures Mitigating Treats

A revival process is based on the living memory of the elders who used to participate at sacred worship ceremonies, and recite offering texts that describes how to conduct the ceremony. The government and local communities have been taken active role in reviving the tradition, but, there are several challenges facing to the revival of this traditional element. The below are some major challenges.

- Mongolia has experienced rapid globalization and urbanization and the flow of herdsmen population from those sacred sites areas to the cities diminishing the scope of the traditional cultural space of worshipping practices in this situation. The locals, though they wish to revive and continue these practices, are lack of knowledge and possibilities to conduct worship rituals. The process of urbanization affecting young people to be more isolated from direct relations with sacred sites is having a bad influence upon the rising generations. Recently, during 2014-2016 ICH NGO’s and community organizations related to sacred sites in close cooperation with religious communities of the local monasteries have been organized a various training courses for preparing a leader practitioners of worshipping rituals at a sacred mountains and sites. Young people from the cities gradually start to come for worshipping ceremonies of sacred mountains which are located at their native rural areas.

- The number of practitioners and masters who are knowledgeable to properly conduct the traditional worshipping rituals and ceremonies has decreased dramatically due to the aforementioned historical reasons. The traditional procedures of worshipping rituals and their symbolic meanings and expressions are almost lost in many local communities.

For enhancing the visibility of importance of sacred sites and improving the capacity-building of ICH NGO’s related to sacred sites have been started to organize various workshops, meetings, and seminars among practitioners of worshipping rituals. For example, in 2015 was organized National workshop for ICH practitioners and among them were more than 20 practitioners of worshipping rituals from rural areas, who made their own presentations of best practices.
• As Mongolia is rich in minerals such as coal, gold, and copper, a large number of mining companies have been operating. A large area of Mongolian territory is under exploration and mining license. Some sacred sites are located within the territories under such licenses that threaten the viability of the element and its continued transmission. Recently, in 2016 such licenses within some sacred sites, for instance, sacred Noyon Mountain, were annulled by decision of the Parliament. In new revised law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage were added new requirements for preliminary prospecting and researching by archeological and ethnological scientific organizations prior issuing land for purposes of economic activities.

• During 2015-2017 Center of Cultural Heritage, Mongolia and UNESCO accredited NGO- Foundation for Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage in cooperation with the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in Asia-Pacific region has created the documentary film (30 minutes) on title “Mongolian traditional practices of worshipping sacred sites” and distributed among schools, cultural centers, related communities and NGOs.

Involvement of communities, practitioners and related NGOs

During the inventorying taken by CCH in 2010-2016, meetings and seminars and research trips, representative people local communities unanimously supported the nomination of Mongolian traditional practices for the worshipping of sacred sites on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

The list of some individuals, representatives of the group and communities, who are gave the consent was submitted to the Secretariat with the nomination file.

Written by:
Battulga Tsend,
Gonzgoi kinship of Uriankhai ethnic group, native person of Sagsai soum (county) of Bayan-Ulgii province, leader of practitioners of worshipping rituals of sacred mountains “Five peaks of Mongol Altai”, “Tsengel Khairkan”, and “Mountain Ezerleg” in the Bayan-Ulgii province

Shagdarsuren Damba
Leader of practitioners of worshipping rituals of sacred mountains Khangai ovoo and Dulaan Khaan in Uvurkhangia province

Monk Soninbayar. Sh
Senior trainer of the Center for training a leader-practitioners of worshipping rituals of sacred mountains and sites

Tuvshintugs Tsamba
Leader of practitioners of worshipping rituals of sacred mountains Alag and Altan-huhii in Khovd province
• Residential address: Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, Bayanzurkh district, 18th sub-district, Apt 22A-193. Tel: +(976) 11 456 113, mobile: + (976) 96699031
• Possessed higher education with the occupation of teacher of Mongolian language and literature

Duurenjargal Ayush

President, Research and Information Center for the Sacred Sites of Mongolia – NGO, main representative organization of sacred sites’ communities and associations.

Involvement of communities, bearers and NGOs in updating process of inventory

Battulga Tsend (leader of practitioners of Gonzoï kinship of Uriankhai ethnic group in Sagsai soum, Bayan-Ulgii province)

He, as a leader of practitioners of worshipping rituals of such sacred mountains as “Five peaks of Mongol Altai”, “Tsengel Khairkhan”, “Gonzoï Ovoo” and “Mountain Ezerleg” in the Bayan-Ulgii province. Last years he has started to conduct every two years in the first month of summer the worship ceremony for sacred Gonzoï Mountain involving the participation of community of Altai Uriankhai ethnic groups.

This community has been revived a traditional sutra (reciting texts) for worshipping local sacred sites and a worshipping song titled “Sutras from three directions”. This worshipping song was revived and sung by young people from local area. Mr Battulga created a book that includes a worshipping rituals and sutras and distributed among the community’s members. He is continuing to work for surviving a longstanding traditions of worshipping Native Sacred Mountains and sites.

Shagdarsuren Damba

Leader of practitioners of of Khalkha ethnicity, worshipping rituals of sacred mountains Khangai ovoo and Dulaan Khaan in Uvurkhangia province

Mr. Shagdarsuren Damba as leader of practitioners of worshipping rituals of this local area has very close relationship with religious community of local Erdene-Zuu monastery for conducting worshipping rituals in accordance with traditional Buddhist manner and order. Lamas (monks) of this monastery started to participate annually in repairing and decorating Ovoo (offering place) at Sacred Mountains and worshipping ceremonies. Mr. Shagdarsuren recently has taken new management rules according to which for each of sacred mountains every year one or wo local residents are responsible for arranging its worship in the first month of summer and related activities. He is eager to revive this very important tradition of worshipping Sacred Mountains and water sources in this native area.
Monk Soninbayar Sh. as senior trainer of Center for training a leader-practitioners of worshipping rituals of sacred mountains and sites (Center of Buddhist Science and Culture at the Gandantegchinlen Monastery)

This Center annually participates in worshipping ceremonies of state worshipping sacred mountains and strives for reviving these ceremonies according to its traditional ways of conducting a worshipping ritual. This Center under the management of monk-scholar Sh.Soninbayar starts a surviving and reviving old sutras of worshipping rituals of sacred mountains and sites, keeps them in the center and distributes to those communities whose sacred sites sutras already found and revived in this center. The center also has created a book and manuals that explain traditional Buddhist symbolism and meanings of rituals of worshipping ceremonies. Recently several leader practitioners of worshipping ritual of Buddhist traditions and practices were trained in this Center.

Altangerel Zunduin
President of NGO “Monastery of Khamar”, a leader of practitioners of worshipping ritual of Khanbayan Zurkh mountain, Chulon Uul mountain in Sainshand district, Dornogobi.

Altangerel Z. as leader of practitioners of worshipping rituals and president of NGO “Monastery Khamar” organized a campaign for restoring sacred Ovoo on the Khan Bayan Zurkh Mountain, circumambulation path, and other sacred structures in the vicinity of the mountain. Also meditation caves were restored and erected a memorial stele to mark the site where Noyon Khutagt lama Danzanravjaa composed the famous long song “Ulemjiin Chanar”.

NGO “Monastery of Khamar”s community restored sacred garden elms containing more than 100 elms in the desert area near the Sacred Khan Bayan Zurkh Mountain. The organization is rehabilitating traditional rituals of worshipping this Sacred Mountain.

Duurenjargal Ayush
President of NGO “Research and training Centre for worshiping of Sacred sites”

This centre has been engaged in various activities for promoting and safeguarding ICH elements related to worshipping practices in Mongolia. Recently, the Centre has carried out the studies on the identification of traditionally worshipped sacred Mountain in Mongolia which resulted in identifying more than 1000 worshipped mountains that have lost worshipping practices during the period of communist ideology, in Mongolia. On these bases of studies, the Centre is going to revive traditional rituals of worshipping ceremony in some sacred places in close cooperation with the local practitioners and monasteries
**List of newly identified practitioners (2017)**

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Province, Soum</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>D.Baljinnyam</td>
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<td>91520103</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Z.Altangerel</td>
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Culture Sector
Division for Heritage

Ref.: CLT/HER/WHC/PSM/15/356  4 December 2015

Subject: Update of the Tentative List of Mongolia

Sir,

I acknowledge with thanks receipt of your letter dated 6 November 2015, concerning the addition of the Sacred Mountains of Mongolia site on the Tentative List. I am pleased to inform you that the documentation submitted complies with the Operational Guidelines and that the site was included on the Tentative List of Mongolia.

Please find, attached, the current Tentative List of Mongolia as registered by the World Heritage Centre.

I take the opportunity to thank you for your cooperation and support in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

Yours sincerely,

Mechtild Rossler
Director
World Heritage Centre

cc: Permanent Delegation of Mongolia to UNESCO
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage

Mongolia
Tentative List

Last Revised: 23/11/2015
Properties: 13

Cultural

- Armarbayasgalant Monastery and its Surrounding Sacred Cultural Landscape
- Archaeological Site at Khuduu Aral and Surrounding Cultural Landscape
- Baldan Bereeven Monastery and its Sacred Surroundings
- Deer Stone Monuments, the Heart of Bronze Age Culture
- Funeral Sites of the Xiongnu Elite
- Petroglyphic Complexes in the Mongolian Gobi
- Sacred Binder Mountain and Its Associated Cultural Heritage Sites
- Sacred Mountains of Mongolia

Mixed

- Highlands of Mongol Altai

Natural

- Cretaceous Dinosaur Fossil Sites in the Mongolian Gobi
- Desert Landscapes of the Mongolian Great Gobi
- Eastern Mongolian Steppes
- Mongolian Daurian Landscape