

## Chapter 14

# Policy Provisions and Teachers' Needs on Climate Change Education for Sustainable Development in Mongolia

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### ABSTRACT

*There is scientific consensus that Mongolia is already facing the negative consequences of climate change. Raising public awareness and increasing education initiatives is one of the most important ways to adapt and mitigate climate change. The present research team reviewed the policies and provisions in support developing climate change education for sustainable development. To strengthen public awareness of climate change and sustainable development, teachers at all level must play an important role. The team analyzed the level of teachers' knowledge of climate change education for sustainable development and determined the needs for teacher training. Education policy recommendations and the possibilities for teacher training were defined.*

### INTRODUCTION

Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address environmental and developmental issues (UNCED, Agenda 21. The United Nations Action from Rio., 1992). From the time sustainable development was first endorsed at the UN General Assembly

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in 1987, the parallel concept of education to support sustainable development has also been explored. From 1987 to 1992, the concept of sustainable development matured as committees discussed, negotiated, and wrote the 40 chapters of Agenda 21. Initial thoughts concerning Education for Sustainable development were captured in chapter 36 of Agenda 21, "Promoting Education, Public Awareness, and Training" (McKeown, Education for Sustainable Development Toolkit, 2002). Obviously, education is an essential tool for achieving sustainability. People around the world recognize that current economic development trends are not sustainable and that public awareness, education and training are essential to move society toward sustainability (Charles Hopkins and Rosalyn McKeown, 2002).

Mongolia, like most of the countries, agreed on the UNFCCC declaring the commitment to develop and implement an Education for Sustainable development, in 1992. The following result is the first national policy document on sustainable development, "MAP 21: Mongolian Action Plan for the 21st Century", which was developed and approved in 1998. One of the main goals, "Concentration on nurturing the educational and scientific sectors to allow them to be better able to meet the diverse intellectual requirements of Mongolians as they strive to implement sustainable development" (MAP, 1998), is the initial and official statement of education for sustainable development in Mongolia.

Climate change impacts the natural environments and the livelihood of the people in Mongolia, obviously. The study of climate change, began in 1979 in Mongolia, after the second World Meteorological Conference. "Climate change" was the first symposium, organized by the Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology in June, 1980 (Dagvadorj.D, Natsagdorj.L, Dorjpurev.J, Namkhainyam.B, 2009). Sustainable development, however, has been discussed in Mongolia since 1992 while the issue of education for sustainable development was initially discussed in policy documents since 1997. As a result, the "State Ecological Policy" was developed and approved by the State Great Khural (Parliament) in 1997. But ecological policy and ecological education issues are strongly based on biological science perspectives in Mongolia, and climate change education for addressing sustainable development issues is still not declared at the official policy level.

Issue is that Mongolia is very sensitive to climate change due to its geographic location, sensitive ecosystems and socioeconomic condition (Dagvadorj.D, Natsagdorj.L, Dorjpurev.J, Namkhainyam.B, 2009). While there is emerging awareness of the current and potential impacts of climate/environmental change on education provision and learning, it is also clear that education: formal and non-formal, from primary through to tertiary and adult education-has an important role to play in addressing this change (Colin Bangay, Nicole Blum, 2010) around the world. Moreover, climate change education for sustainable development is a new term in Mongolia. According to its obligations and commitments under the UNFCCC, the Mongolian Government initiated and implemented the National Action Program in Climate Change which was approved by the Government in 2000. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)-based Comprehensive National Development (MDGbCPND) Strategy of Mongolia was approved by the Parliament of Mongolia on 12 February 2008 (MNET, 2011). Pilot area 5 of the MDGbCPND strategy states, "To create an environment for sustainable development in the way of building capacity to adapt to climate change, and limiting and protecting loss of ecological equivalence" and this statement is the basic rationale for the development of the National Action Program on Climate Change (MNET, 2011). Because of the statement, "Within this framework, activities in expanding public participation and awareness about eliminating negative consequences, ways to overcome, and adapt to climate change and desertification will be implemented" (Pilot area 5 of the strategy) (MDGbCPND,

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