

Pasture lands which have been the basis for pastoral animal husbandry for centuries are losing their fertility. The main reason to blame is overgrazing. Pasture degradation is caused by natural and climate change factors and human factors. If young herder families numbered 90 thousand in 1990 it soared up to 170 thousand, one third of the total population in Mongolia, nowadays. This jump in number of herder families emerged from industrial collapse and large number of redundancies in the 1990s. Social shifts and changes since 1990 led to the tragedy of commons effect, uncontrolled and misbehaved use of pasture lands, common property. Over population of animals and fierce competition for pasture lands are damaging soil, vegetation and water resources in pasture lands which in their turn exacerbating animal products and reducing herders' income opportunities. Herders began to increase their livestock number to compensate for the loss of pasture and animal productivity. Two in five herder households live poor according to the official statistics. Provided this situation persists more number of herders will plunge into poverty and pasture lands will turn to deserted lands with danger of shaking national food safety issues.

Since 2004, Switzerland and Mongolia have cooperating in poverty and ecological vulnerability reduction. "Green Gold" Project which addresses a number of pasture challenges is clear demonstration of SDC's effective collaboration with government agencies and people of Mongolia.

"Green Gold" Project, in harmony with similar projects funded by SDC such livestock and decertification and in line with government agenda, focuses on sustainable use of pasture lands, backbone of rural livelihoods and herding communities.

It aims to build the capacity and lay out conditions for higher productivity and income sources, restore and keep pasture lands intact and ensure stable growth in herders income sources. "Green Gold" Project has been undergoing three phases of implementation since 2004.

- **2004-2008 – Phase I**
- **2009 – Transition Phase**
- **2010-2012 – Phase II.**

"Green Gold" Phase 1 piloted establishment and strengthening of herders self management institution and thereafter creation of enabling conditions for pasture use, protection and rehabilitation. This phase captured 5 ecologically different soums. During Phase 1 small and semi formal groups merged into large and formal Pasture User Groups (PUGs) through which herders cooperate with other stakeholders including local governments in

practicing sustainable pasture management. The results of Phase 1 demonstrated that sound use and protection contributes to upkeep of pasture lands and establishment of herders' self management institutions and their cooperation with civic organizations and local governments are the only way to achieve better livelihood for herders. "Green Gold" Project have been capturing 66

soums
from 9
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National Development Strategy and "Green Gold" Project

- Parliament approved National Development Strategy until 2021 in 2008. The strategy is based on MDG and forward looking objectives set out in 304 policy reports. Sustainable pasture management system is one of the parts of this strategy document and "Green Gold" Project aims to contribute to implementation of its four objectives: environment, governance, economy and social issues.

- Environmental objective– "Green Gold" will contribute to reduction and regression of pasture degradation;

- Governance objective- "Green Gold" will contribute to achievement of this objective by making legal analysis, drafting pasture related law and proposing recommendations. At local areas, PUGs supported by "Green Gold" are actively cooperating with local governments.

- Economic objective – "Green Gold" is expected to make contribution to private sector led economic growth. It plans to increase the efficiency of like minded projects supported by SDC and other donors.

- Social objective- "Green Gold" will set enabling condition for herder communities to access loans and social services so that they meet their basic life necessities (health and education services) and diversity their income sources supported by Revolving Fund.

MDGs and "Green Gold" Project

- "Green Gold" Project is expected to contribute to implementation of MDGs which are integrated in the development strategy by the government of Mongolia.

- MDG- 1. Poverty reduction: "Green Gold" Project will carry out income generation and poverty reduction activities.

- MDG- 3. Gender equality: Project team and partners will be supportive to equal and free participation of women in project activities.

- MDG- 7. Environmental Sustainability: Support will be given to people to engage in herding which conforms with pasture carrying capacity and sustainably use natural resources.