7th Meeting of the ICAPP Youth Wing
(Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, February 23-26, 2024)

ICAPP/7YW/004

Concept Paper

Background

Hon. Uchral Nyam-Osor, Chairperson of the ICAPP Youth Wing, and Minister of Digital Development and Communications of Mongolia and President of the Social Democratic Youth of the Mongolian People's Party (MPP), had a meeting with Hon. Chung Eui-yong, Chairperson of the ICAPP Standing Committee, in Seoul, Republic of Korea, on November 23, 2023, and offered to host the 7th Meeting of the ICAPP Youth Wing in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, during February 23 to 26, 2024.

Hon. Uchral Nyam-Osor particularly emphasized that it would be a good opportunity for youth representatives to experience cold weather of Mongolian winter. He said the MPP would include some outdoor activities in the program of the Youth Wing meeting, such as dog-sleighing and big camp fire, which he believed would be a memorable challenge for foreign participants, particularly those from tropical countries. He said traditional Mongolian winter outfits would be provided for such occasions to help keep warmth.

The MPP, after consultation with the ICAPP Secretariat, proposed **"We say 'Yes' to Youth in Parliament"** as the theme for the 7th Meeting of the ICAPP Youth Wing. The MPP also informed the Secretariat of its plan to invite 30 to 40 youth representatives from the Socialist International and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and about 100 Mongolian youth representatives to the event, in addition to 60 to 70 representatives from political parties that are represented in the ICAPP.

The previous six meetings of the ICAPP Youth Wing had been held in Kuala Lumpur (2012), Baku (2013), Colombo (2014), Moscow (2018), Baku (2019) and Ulaanbaatar (2023).

Challenges of youth participation in politics

The young generation has been a creative and dynamic source of human development throughout history, yet youth also faced poverty, inadequate opportunity for education and employment, and multiple forms of social and political discrimination. This tendency is even further exacerbated by the global pandemic of Covid-19. The collective voice and actions of young individuals always prove to be crucial in influencing the course of events and fostering positive changes to them. In the pursuit of a truly representative political system, the inclusion of all segments of society is paramount. Youth is not represented adequately, however, in formal political institutions and processes such as parliaments and political parties. The situation is even more difficult for young women. To strengthen the capacity and role of youth for tackling the challenges they constantly face, there is a need to increase youth representation in the political life in every society.

In most countries, eligibility for the national parliament starts at 25 years or higher and it is common practice to refer to politicians as 'young' if they are below 40 years of age. As a group, young people are not adequately represented within formal political structures, as evidenced by the low rates of their parliamentary involvement. According to the latest U.N. data, almost 30%

of humanity belong to the ages between 20 to 39 in 2020. And the IPU's latest report reveals that although parliaments are getting slightly younger, but are still a long way from representing young people proportionately. Currently 18.8% of parliamentarians are aged below 40, compared with 17.5% in 2021. The rate of parliamentarians under 30 years of age is a mere 2.8%.

To improve the situation, young people should equip themselves with the correct understanding of their rights and duties, and build capacity to engage in political processes for meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making. When disenfranchised or disengaged, they would simply become a sizable portion of the population without a substantial voice or influence in decisions that will profoundly impact their future lives. As agents of positive transformation, both young leaders and aspiring youth candidates should empower themselves through diverse programs of mentorship, capacity-building, and leadership development.

In this regard, the political parties in the region are also strongly encouraged to develop and provide various institutional assistance to young politicians to help increase their representation in their respective parliaments, to ensure that youth perspectives are integrated into key policy decisions, and to provide opportunities for young politicians to hold key roles in the legislative process.

Ulaanbaatar Statement

The "Ulaanbaatar Statement" that reflects the key outcomes of the discussions at the 7th Meeting of the ICAPP Youth Wing will be adopted at the closing session. The first draft of the statement will be circulated to all participants prior to the meeting.