



Will change in government lead to improvement of Mongolia's environmental sector?

The Mongolian Democratic Party (MDP) won the majority of the parliamentary election in 2012. The MDP is a powerful party in the coalition and has shown a strong interest in local self-governance and a strong fiscal decentralization by supporting the new Budget Law of 2012 (Jargalsaikhany, December 12th 2012, Eurasia Daily Monitor). The MDP won 12 Aimags and the majority of the capital city electorates in the local government election in December 2012, which could mobilize local level politics with the party's agenda (Jargalsaikhany, December 12th 2012, Eurasia Daily Monitor). The Civil Will Green Party (CWGP), as one coalition partner in the government, demonstrates more concern over environmental protection in the party's manifestation (Interview, CWGP 2012.09.26). The CWGP heads the Ministry of Nature, Environment and Green Development (MNEGD) in the new government.



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Mongolia is considered a vulnerable country in the climate change scenarios. Currently, Mongolia is covered around 30% in Gobi desert area. The rest of the country contains semi-arid or arid areas. Geographically Mongolia is a landlocked country with low precipitation. It is estimated that annual mean temperatures have increased by 2.1°C since the 1940s (Batimaa et al. 2011). The impact of climate change in Mongolia deteriorates the water availability rapidly. Mainly, groundwater resources are overexploited in the hard winter period, (almost seven months in a year), for household consumption, animal husbandry, agriculture and industrial purposes (Tsogtbaatar et al. 2009).

Mongolia has rich mineral resources which are directly used for many industrial products by industries in developed countries. Multinational companies have es-

tablished mining plants in many parts of Mongolia. Economic liberalization accelerates the trend of investment by foreign mining industries. The mining industry, while boosting the Mongolian economy, affects the ecosystem heavily. It means that the factor for the economic blessing is creating insecure human wellbeing in the country side. Leakage of chemicals and discharging of waste water in surface water and groundwater lead to emerging water pollution and direct effects on economic development and human wellbeing (Tsogtbaatar et al. 2009). In our field research last week with the research team of National University of Mongolia about Environmental Flow Assessment in Orkhan River in Mongolia, we interviewed couple of local peoples including herders and farmers, and governance officers such as governors, local parliament members, environmental protectors, natural inspectors and water security officers in the river basin.



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In the first photo, the mixing of the contaminated Orkhan River water with one of tributary of the main Orkhan River can be viewed. This water is being polluted by the mining industries in the upper catchment areas of the Orkhan River. The mining industry was started since 1993. Aimag Government gives most of the a licenses without proper Environmental Impact Assessment and without people's hearing. We were not allowed to enter to the upper mining industry (the second photo). This mining industry is located directly on the natural source of Orkhan River. Local people express their concern about arbitrary mining industries activities. They always struggle with these companies. They told us that these lands are belonging to them and they do not want to escape from their homeland. We can be witnesses on how these companies block the natural water flow and by washing mining material with Arsenic and other chemicals. The downstream local people and governors also complain this worst situation of poisoning of Orkhan River Water which led to decrease the water quality.



Another threat is that water quantity is decreasing as a result of climate change. It is a significant factor when comparing local people views about water quantity the last 20 years. However, the local people's right to drink pure water, food security and the right to secure their homeland are being violated in these areas as the negative consequences of the arbitrary and profit-oriented mining industry.

The impact of the global green development discourse in Mongolian governance strategies can be observed through the renaming of the Ministry with green development in new government. Water and forests are the main themes of the MNEDG. Water management is one priority of the MNEDG with reforestation and pollution eradication (Byambadorj, October 5th, 2012 UBPOST). As noted in Chapter 5, there has been institutional restructuring in water and forest management and governance. By terminating the Water Authority, the power was brought into the ministry (Interview, 2012.10.01; Byambadorj, October 5th, 2012 UBPOST). Concerning the water sector, the new government policy demonstrates priority over river headwaters and protected zones of water reservoirs within a comprehensive water management policy (The coalition government platform, 2012).

People in Mongolia are waiting what it means real Justice by them with real human wellbeing with environmental protection. Otherwise, Multinational Companies and local mining companies get rich by giving little compensations to Mongolian people which are highly criticized. Even in the development plan of Mongolia, it is neglected balance development with another part of the country. Under the uncontrolled neo-liberal economic policies leads to develop only Ulaanbaatar the capital city with 2/3 of whole Mongolian population. Also, other issue is wealth is accumulated only few people (mainly is driven by mining profit) of the country while other majority are poor. It is created a rhythmic idiom about Mongolian "Mongolia is not only Ulaanbaatar and is not only few rich people".

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Agrarian Transformation in Lower Saxony?

Lower Saxony is Germany second largest and second most populous state (or "Land"). With close to 8 Million inhabitants, it hosts more people than, for example, EU member state Denmark.

Lower Saxony is also one of Germany's biggest producer of agrarian produce. It is home to some 2.848.000 cows and 8.428.000 pigs, as well as 56.609.000 chicken (Numbers from 2011). However, most of the animals reared for meat production are found in factory farming; organic agriculture only makes up 3% of the agricultural sector (compared to 9% in Hesse). Poultry farming is the biggest trend, it has risen by 81% over the last decade. The huge concentration of animals in factory farming, des-



trained for cheap production, has led to social conflict.

Increasingly, citizens worry about environmental and health risks connected to intensive meat production. Fear of disease due to overuse of anti-biotics, ground-water contamination, over-fertilization of arable land, obesity, unfair trade practices: some keywords in the discourse on the dangers of factory farming. Mr Hettwer, Chair of the Lower Saxon branch of the Alliance for Farms not Agro-Factories, believes that the movement for cleaner, healthier food has the potential to be the biggest contemporary social movement. Mr Hettwer and his allies are involved in awareness raising – their enemies call it fearmongering. Nevertheless, tenthousand people walked the streets of Berlin in January to declare “We are fed up” – with what they see as perversions in the German (and global) food system.

One day after the protest march, on January 20, Lower Saxony held general elections. The incumbent, Mr. David McAllister, had followed Mr Christian Wulff as Prime Minister when Mr Wulff was elected President of the Federal Republic. Mr Wulff had to leave office after only 20 months due to accusations of corruption, a fact that hardly featured in electoral campaigns of January 2013.

It was going to be a close call: The ruling parties, the conservative Christian Democrats (CDU) and the Liberal Party (FDP), had been in power for ten years. Especially the former are closely connected with conventional, often large-scale farming enterprises. One example: In 2010, Minister of Agriculture Mrs. Astrid Grotelüschen (CDU) had to resign from office because she was obviously too close to vested interests in the poultry industry.

A center-left coalition of Social Democrats (SPD) and Greens was challenging the cabinet of Mr. McAllister and managed to marginalize other political parties, namely the Left and the Pirate Party, in public opinion. After a long election night, the so-called red-green coalition won the day by only a few thousand votes. Mr Stephan Weil (SPD), former mayor of the state capital, the City of Hanover, was elected Prime Minister. Some believe that the votes for the exceptionally strong Greens made the difference; votes quickly connected to the wide-spread discontent with agrarian policies.

Mr Christian Meyer of the Green Party was one of the most outspoken critics of factory farming; he campaigned vigorously for stricter legislation, better animal protection and against what he saw as an increasingly excessive livestock industry. Now, on February 19, 2013, Mr. Meyer

was made the new Minister of Agriculture. Among revelations of new food scandals, Mr Meyer promised to take on problems and work towards agrarian transformation. As a first step, his ministry announced a drastic increase in handouts for organic farming, creating incentives to switch from conventional to organic.



Picture credits: Sören Köpke

Now it is the part of the powerful lobby of agrarian industrialists to take part in fear-mongering. While citizen initiatives and environmental organizations put their hope in some policy change, conventional farmers are afraid to lose some hard-earned privileges. Lower Saxony's countryside is a conservative social space. Only the future will tell whether a switch towards more sustainable practices in farming can be made.

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