



*The AMERICAN CHAMBER of Commerce in Mongolia*

**Press Release**  
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## **Women Business Leaders as Catalysts of Change**

ULAANBAATAR – The American Chamber of Commerce in Mongolia (AmCham Mongolia) held its September Monthly Meeting on August 24, 2019 at the Blue Sky Hotel & Tower. The meeting was in a panel discussion format with acclaimed women business leaders of Mongolia. The topic of discussion, “Women business leaders as catalysts of change” is AmCham’s initiative to open up a discussion about gender disparities in the workplace, and within Mongolia’s business community.

On average, Mongolian women are better educated than their male peers, yet they are less likely to make use of their education. According to a study conducted by the World Bank, women of various age groups and levels of education spoke of their gender-specific difficulties in accessing jobs and career opportunities. A lot of women feel forced and trapped in precarious work conditions. Most have confessed they mistrust or fear their managers or employers. Gender gaps in the country’s labor market include forced labor participation, unequal pay, and higher tendency of women to work in insecure environments. Findings from focus group discussions indicate that the prominent reasons for their perceived underlining disparities in the workplace is based on societal norms, prevailing views on men and women’s roles in marriage, household and care duties, “suitable” career choice, and unavailable government support services and programs.

Woman representatives in the Mongolian Parliament reached its highest at 17.1% (13/76 seats) in 2016, which is the highest among the seven parliamentary elections in Mongolian history. Changes to the recently amended election law, the quota for female candidates to be nominated by political parties was reduced from 30% to 20%. In the private sector, it is estimated that women comprise only around 30% of middle level managers and 15% of higher level positions.

The panel discussion was moderated by AmCham Board Member and Chairwoman of Monpolymet Group Munkhnasan Narmandakh, who asked thought-provoking questions from the panelists. Topics included the Mongolian current gender gap issues, women politicians, their limited influence and power, importance of equal pay and benefits for all genders, career choices, social norms and expectations, and balancing household and mother duties with work.

Partner at ME MGL Advocates LLC Dunnaran Baaasankhuu approached the discussion from a legal point of view, and focused on policies that disenfranchise or empower women. She mentioned how women are generally paid less than their male counterparts, and their property rights are usually transferred to their husbands. Thus, it is important to implement policies that encourage women’s independence.

CEO of Mongol TV Nomin Chinbat approached the discussion from a psychological and sociological point of view. The differences in how we raise our girls and boys is what shapes society and identity. Women are usually assigned jobs and tasks that are “suitable” for their gender. Societal norms and traditions reinforce such gender stereotypes. Nomin quoted, “We tell our girls to be introverted, calm and collected, while teaching our boys to be assertive and dominant.”

Resident Director of American Center for Mongolian Studies (ACMS) Patricia Turbold quoted, “Women must learn to support, empower and build one another. We need to stop stirring competition between women.” She also mentioned how men are more likely to have informal networks such as clubs and associations through which the “brotherhood” mentality is reinforced.

CEO of Petrovis Venture Capital LLC Shinezaya Batbold emphasized, “It is of critical importance to openly discuss societal issues such as gender disparities. The most promising way to make an impact and change the status quo is through the private-sector. Having regular discussions like today’s AmCham meeting is what will catalyze change.”

When the discussion was opened up to the audience, the discourse was further enriched. For instance, the CEO of Bloomberg TV Mongolia Dolgion Erdenebaatar pointed out, “The recent talks of changes to the constitutional amendments had a proposal that stated the President of Mongolia has to be of age 55 or above. This is concerning given the fact women’s retirement age starts from 55.” The low retirement age of 55 years for women with multiple children is intended to respect their contribution to society, but could also remove them from the jobs market prematurely.

### **About AmCham Mongolia**

AmCham Mongolia is an independent membership-driven organization that seeks to build, strengthen, and protect business between the United States and Mongolia, and to actively promote Mongolia as a destination for American investment. AmCham Mongolia is the official local affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the largest business federation in the world with over 3 million member companies. AmCham Mongolia is also a member of the Asia-Pacific Council of American Chambers of Commerce, consisting of 29 American Chambers of Commerce in the Asia-Pacific region.