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“ACCOUNTABILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT: CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVE”

principles of accountability for civil society organizatio

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSO	Civil society organizations
IO	International organizations
SDG	Sustainable development goal

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT: CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVE

BACKGROUND

Civil society is a vital component of a democratic system, serving as a pillar for protecting democracy, human rights, and freedoms, as well as ensuring social justice. A strong, **independent**, and developed civil society, which **voluntarily** unites and acts for the common good and interests, forms the foundation for a stable and inclusive democratic system.

Civil society and the media are the key mechanisms for ensuring the active participation of citizens, monitoring government policies and decisions, their implementation, and results, and protecting human rights and justice.

Mongolian civil society has matured and actively developed over the years of successes, achievements, and challenges, following the development of democracy. Our activities have entered a new phase, today strengthening transparency and accountable governance, seeking financial stability, and expanding cooperation with the government, the private sector, and media organizations.

We are on the threshold of a new era in which we will make meaningful contributions to strengthening social justice, further intensifying anti-corruption efforts, addressing environmental and climate change challenges, protecting the rights of marginalized groups, advancing social innovation and digital participation, and strengthening peace and security.

Therefore, the document "Accountability for Development: Civil Society Initiative" has been developed to further strengthen the accountable, transparent, and effective activities of civil society organizations.

The document "Accountability for Development: Civil Society Initiative" was developed based on the following rationale and requirements:

1. **The Need to Strengthen Public Trust** – Increasing public trust in civil society organizations (CSOs) from the general public, the government, the private sector, and other stakeholders is essential for ensuring the stability of civil society;
2. **The Need to Enhance Citizen Participation** – CSOs play a crucial role in amplifying citizens' voices at the policy level and increasing public participation, thereby promoting transparency and accountability;
3. **The Need to Strengthen Governance, Transparency, and Accountability Standards** – Civil society acts as a bridge between the government and citizens, contributing to democratic governance and enhancing state transparency and accountability. Today, the role of CSOs in monitoring the government and influencing policy changes has become increasingly important;

4. **The Responsibility to Contribute to the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** – Mongolia can fulfill its commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals by fostering partnerships and effectively implementing social accountability, thereby contributing to tangible development outcomes;
5. **The Need to Align with International Best Practices and Trends** – As CSOs in Asia and other regions are improving their operations based on accountability principles, Mongolia must adopt and adapt these best practices to enhance its civil society sector.

By strengthening civil society accountability:

- Promotes justice and reduces corruption in society;
- Increases citizen participation and influences decision-making;
- Supports democratic development and enhances government oversight;
- Contributes to sustainable development and enables environmental protection.

This document is a joint initiative by civil society organizations aimed at contributing to positive social change by reinforcing past successes and best practices, renewing their focus on the principles of collaboration, accountability, and partnership, and establishing a responsible system based on citizen participation.

The CSOs joining this initiative will actively partner to acknowledge, adhere to, and promote the principles of the "Accountability for Development: Civil Society Initiative.

PRINCIPLES

1. **Working for human rights and social justice.** By adhering to a human rights-based approach to development, we will partner with all development stakeholders to eliminate and reduce the causes and factors contributing to social inequality rooted in the system.
2. **Operating independently and autonomously.** Maintaining our independence and impartiality, free from any political or economic interests, we will conduct our activities while protecting the public good.
3. **Adhering to the principles of transparency, openness, and accountability.** Providing information to the public in an open, understandable, and accessible manner, thereby increasing our transparency and accountability. Through self-assessment, we will continuously improve and enhance the effectiveness of our activities.
4. **Strengthening the efforts for positive social change.** Promoting good governance and sustainable development by prioritizing fairness, inclusivity, and equality in efforts to positive social change.
5. **Supporting meaningful and effective participation.** Strengthening civil society's role in decision-making processes, amplifying the voices of diverse social groups, and ensuring their rights to development and well-being.
6. **Fostering partnerships and collaboration for effective communication.** Enhancing collaboration between civil society, government, private sector, and media organizations through shared knowledge, learning, and joint initiatives.
7. **Contribute to environmental protection and sustainable development.** Actively participating in environmental protection, climate change mitigation, and advocating for ecological justice.
8. **Implementing effective policy advocacy.** Strengthening partnerships and communication to influence policies that ensure human rights and a sustainable future, while encouraging civic engagement and participation.
9. **Supporting efforts for peace and security.** Advocating for human right, preventing violence, crises, and conflicts, and contributing to global peace and solidarity movements.

WE COLLABORATE IN DISCUSSING, REFINING, IMPROVING, VALIDATING, AND PROMOTING THIS DOCUMENT OF ACCOUNTABILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT: CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVE.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

PRINCIPLE 1: PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

We will work in partnership with all development stakeholders to eliminate and reduce the causes and factors of social inequality caused by the system, adhering to a human rights-based development approach.

Civil society organizations are a vital part of the human rights protection mechanism, as they monitor the activities of government institutions, promote civic engagement, and amplify the voices of the public.

In implementing this principle, all policies and activities will be aligned with international human rights principles and the legislation of Mongolia, ensuring non-discrimination, and actively participating in measures to identify, monitor, and remedy human rights violations.

For this purpose, the following measures will be implemented **to promote public participation**:

- Launch initiatives that ensure citizen engagement;
- Support public involvement in the policy-making process and establish regular platforms for amplifying public voices;
- Organize programs, trainings, and awareness-raising activities to educate citizens about their rights and responsibilities and enhance their capacity to protect them.

In implementing the above measures, partnerships and cooperation will be developed with public and private sector entities, media, and international organizations. We will strive to strengthen partnerships and collaboration with local communities and other non-governmental organizations to protect the rights of social groups.

We will actively work to protect the interests of marginalized, remote, vulnerable groups and other individuals whose rights have been violated; restore violated rights; prevent human rights abuses; amplify citizens' voices; and raise awareness and knowledge of human rights.

We will actively participate in identifying, reporting, and preventing human rights violations; raise our voice against the centralization and abuse of power, dominance, and corruption; and contribute recommendations to improve the legal environment. Through these efforts, we aim to make a meaningful contribution to the protection of human rights and social justice.

PRINCIPLE 2: OPERATING INDEPENDENTLY

We will maintain our independence, free from any political or economic interests, and operate in a manner that upholds and protects the public interest.

Civil society organizations will maintain their independence and autonomy, and make a meaningful contribution to society through the following approaches.

Ensuring financial independence: CSOs will secure funding from diverse sources (membership fees, donations, project-based funding, income from statutory activities, and the state budget) while avoiding overreliance on a single source, ensuring financial transparency and openness in all operations.

Maintaining independence in policy and operations: CSOs will remain free from the influence of any political party or business group, adhering to the principles of accountability and independence from government control, and will carry out activities that align with the real needs of society.

Operating within the legal framework: CSOs will operate in accordance with the Constitution of Mongolia and other relevant laws, protect legal rights, and contribute to legal reforms and the improvement of the legal environment for civil society.

PRINCIPLE 3: UPHOLDING TRANSPARENCY, OPENNESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Providing information to the public in an open, understandable, and accessible manner, thereby enhancing transparency and accountability. Through regular self-assessment, we will continuously improve and enhance the effectiveness of our activities.

Transparency refers to providing information to the public in an open, understandable, and accessible manner. The transparency of the operations, funding, and decision-making of civil society organizations is crucial for gaining the trust of citizens. Civil society organizations will adhere to the principles of transparency, openness, and accountability through the following approaches.

Ensuring information is open and factual: The organization will maintain transparency about its goals, activity plans, budget allocations, and sources of funding, providing information to the public through digital platforms and other channels. Regarding human rights and social justice issues, only fact-based, clear, and accurate information will be disseminated.

Reporting on activities: The organization will present the results of its activities, projects, and programs to its members and to the public transparently.

Inclusive participation: Stakeholder participation will be ensured in the decision-making process, incorporating the views and opinions of interested parties.

Accountability: The organization strives to be accountable to the public and stakeholders for its activities, decisions, and their outcomes. It will adhere to the laws and ethical standards of Mongolia, follow the principles of accountability, and establish internal mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating outcomes to ensure responsibility. The impact of projects and activities will be regularly assessed, conclusions drawn, and validated through self-assessment.

Self-assessment¹ is a crucial tool that allows organizations to measure the effectiveness of their operations, governance, and impact, providing an opportunity for improvement. By using the results of self-assessments, civil society organizations can continuously enhance operations, increase transparency and accountability, and strengthen public trust. Additionally, it strengthens the internal capacity of the organization, helps define the strategy more effectively, and increases the ability to develop practical solutions that align with the evolving needs of society.

Demanding State Transparency: Civil society activities aimed at strengthening social accountability, with the involvement of the government, private sector, and citizens, are the most significant expression of accountability. To achieve this, efforts can be made to promote transparency and accountability principles, organize training and awareness-raising activities, and establish mechanisms for citizen oversight.

¹There are various tools and models that can be used for conducting self-assessments. Such as, Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT), CIVICUS - Civil Society Index (CSI), GAIN (Governance and Accountability Improvement Needs) Assessment, The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Self-Assessment, Participatory Organizational Evaluation Tool (POET)

PRINCIPLE 4: STRENGTHENING EFFORTS FOR POSITIVE SOCIAL CHANGE

In pursuing our mission towards good governance and sustainable development, we will prioritize fairness, inclusivity, and equality, contributing to positive social change.

We will support open initiatives that ensure public participation in promoting transparent and accountable governance, strengthen cooperation with the government, private sector, and media organizations, and adhere to the principle of remaining free from corruption and conflicts of interest in our activities.

CSOs will implement the following activities for positive social change.

Influencing at the policy level. Civil society organizations will intensify their efforts to promote social sustainability, justice, and equality, increasing their impact at the policy level.

Supporting fair and inclusive development. Civil society organizations will support the participation of social groups in development and influence the creation of policies that promote fair and inclusive development.

Supporting active citizen participation. Civil society organizations will aim to provide the public with accurate and truthful information, develop platforms for policy research and evidence-based initiatives, and strive to create a positive impact on society through their activities for the well-being of the community and inclusive development.

PRINCIPLE 5: SUPPORTING MEANINGFUL AND EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION

In the decision-making process involving consensus, civil society organizations will amplify the voices of social groups, strengthen meaningful and real participation, and protect their rights to benefit from and engage in development.

Meaningful participation is a core principle of democracy, good governance, and sustainable development, which fosters trust, enhances collaboration, and contributes to more effective decision-making. To have an impact on decisions, meaningful participation will be implemented through methods that are informed, equitable, inclusive, accountable, transparent, sustainable, and result-driven.

To ensure meaningful participation, the following actions will be implemented:

- **Transparency of Information** – Providing accessible and understandable information to citizens and the public.
- **Creating Participation Mechanisms** – Utilizing forums, discussions, consultations, and participatory tools to reflect the views of social groups.
- **Capacity Building** – Implementing training and development programs to enhance the knowledge and skills of citizens and local organizations.

Through these steps, real participation from citizens will be enhanced, paving the way for sustainable and effective social change.

PRINCIPLE 6: FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION AND DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Strengthening cooperation and partnerships with civil society, the government, the private sector, and media organizations, sharing best practices, knowledge, and information, learning from each other, and collaborating together.

In order to collaboratively address multifaceted issues, share resources, and achieve mutually beneficial outcomes, we will always seek solutions based on trust and understanding. Effective communication channels will be used to raise awareness of our activities and to receive feedback and suggestions from the public.

We will adhere to a policy that benefits both parties, prioritizing open, transparent, and clear communication. To achieve this:

- Identify the needs, interests, and resources of partners;
- Establish clear goals and expectations for collaboration;
- Develop short and long-term plans for partnership development;
- Organize regular meetings and consultative processes;
- Effectively utilize both formal and informal communication channels;
- Adopt a media communication strategy and plan to enhance human resources and their capacities;
- Prioritize the creation of communication mechanisms by developing digital platforms and information networks, encouraging active attention from all parties involved.

To ensure effective partnerships, efforts will be made to regularly monitor the progress of cooperation, support mutual learning, and enhance understanding between partners.

PRINCIPLE 7: CONTRIBUTE TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Actively engage in environmental protection, mitigation of climate change impacts, and promotion of sustainable development, while advocating for environmental justice.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) have a vital role to play in environmental protection and the promotion of sustainable development, aiming to maintain ecological balance, ensure the responsible use of natural resources, support adaptation to climate change, and foster sustainable lifestyles across all levels of society.

In the interest of the public good, civil society organizations advocate for environmental justice by protecting biodiversity, ensuring environmental sustainability, mitigating the negative impacts of climate change, strengthening the resilience of vulnerable communities, and improving their socio-economic conditions and quality of life.

For this purpose, civil society organizations serve as a bridge fostering mutual understanding, partnerships, and cooperation among the government, civil society, and the media by promoting active citizen participation, traditional knowledge, and community-led initiatives.

In implementing this principle, civil society organizations will prioritize transparency of information, participatory justice, accountability, innovative solutions, and collaboration. Work in partnership with the government, private sector, and community groups, contributing to the implementation of sustainable development goals through policy-level engagement.

We will support green economy and responsible business initiatives, and prioritize implementing environmentally friendly and sustainable development-oriented solutions in our operations.

PRINCIPLE 8: IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE POLICY ADVOCACY

To promote a sustainable future that ensures and upholds human rights and freedoms, we will implement our policy influence through partnerships, collaboration, and effective communication.

We are committed to advancing policy influence aimed at guaranteeing human rights and freedoms for a sustainable future. To ensure our policy impact is effective and results-driven, we will focus on the following measures:

1. Develop any information based on research and evidence:

- Study the current policy environment and legal framework.
- Identify the most critical issues and propose policy solutions.
- Evaluate the outcomes of previous policies and implemented actions.

2. Engage stakeholders:

- Foster collaboration with government institutions.
- Collaborate with civil society organizations, professional associations, and research institutions.
- Ensure the voices of social groups and local communities reach the policy level.

3. Develop an information and advocacy strategy:

- Launch campaigns aimed at increasing public understanding and support.
- Actively use media and social media in advocacy activities.
- Communicate the significance of policies in a simple and understandable manner to the public.

4. Conduct lobbying and advocacy activities:

- Submit official policy recommendations to decision-makers.
- Propose draft laws or amendments at the parliamentary or government level.
- Organize impact meetings and consultations.

5. Monitor and evaluate the outcomes of policy influence:

- Regularly monitor how policy changes are being implemented.
- Develop indicators to measure outcomes (such as the enactment of policy decisions, the level of public participation, and the degree of policy implementation).
- Identify areas that need further improvement.

PRINCIPLE 9: SUPPORTING EFFORTS FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

Support the efforts of development stakeholders to protect human rights, prevent violence, crises, and conflicts, and contribute to the global peace policy and movement for peaceful coexistence and safety.

We will support the efforts of development stakeholders to uphold human rights, prevent violence, crises, and conflicts, and maintain peace and security of citizens. To achieve this:

Focus on ensuring the active participation of the government, private sector, media, public, and civil society organizations.

Strive to resolve any disputes or conflicts through peaceful means, utilizing negotiations and mediation tools.

Contribute to the promotion of peace education, raise public awareness, and engage in enlightenment activities to increase understanding.

Implementation Steps:

1. Participate in the following activities to strengthen the policy and legal framework:

- Participate in the development of peace and security strategies and policies;
- Contribute to improving the legal environment to prevent crime and violence;
- Support the creation of citizen-led safety monitoring systems.

2. To increase public participation, we will work as follows:

- Organize peace education programs, trainings, and public campaigns;
- Encourage and empower the participation of youth and women in peacebuilding.

3. Participate in the following activities to reduce disaster risk and ensure human safety:

- Engage in the development of risk mitigation plans;
- Support community protection measures during emergencies;
- Promote urban planning and infrastructure development that ensures public safety.

4. Expand national and international cooperation

- Cooperate with international organizations in the areas of peace and security;
- Support and implement initiatives and projects of the UN and international development agencies.

5. Use of information and technology

- Promote and collaborate on the implementation of smart technologies that enhance public safety;
- Disseminate safety-related information to the public;
- Participate in activities to strengthen cybersecurity and prevent cybercrime.

APPENDIX

How civil society organizations conduct self-assessment?

Self-assessment is a vital tool that helps organizations measure and improve their performance, governance, and impact. It can be done through the following stages:

1. Setting Goals and Criteria

- Define the objectives of the assessment (e.g., transparency, financial management, policy impact, etc.).
- Establish key assessment criteria (such as productivity, governance, financial stability, cooperation).

2. Data Collection

- Review internal reports and financial documents.
- Gather feedback from members, partner organizations, and the public.
- Use surveys, interviews, and questionnaires to collect data.

3. Analysis

- Compare results with previous assessments.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Identify areas for improvement.

4. Developing an Activity Plan

- Create policies and actions to address identified shortcomings.
- Determine training and development needs.
- If necessary, propose changes to the organization's structure or regulations.

5. Establishing a Monitoring and Evaluation System

- Implement a regular assessment system.
- Set measurable indicators to track the outcomes of activities and conduct periodic evaluations.
- Ensure transparency by reporting results to the public.

This self-assessment process is crucial for enhancing an organization's sustainability and effectiveness while building the trust of the public, funders, and partner organizations.