STATEMENT BY H.E. MR ALTANGEREL SHUKHER, AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT DELEGATE OF MONGOLIA TO UNESCO AT THE 36TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO

Paris, October 29, 2011

Madam President of the General Conference,
Madam Chairman of the Executive Board,
Madam Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

Madam President, let me begin by expressing my sincere congratulations to your election as President of the 36th General Conference and assure you of Mongolia’s full cooperation in your endeavors. The Government of Mongolia also congratulates South Sudan for becoming the 194th Member State of UNESCO.

Upon the invitation of Madam Director-General of UNESCO the Government of Mongolia had the honor to organize a Gala Concert of Mongolian traditional music on the occasion of the 36th Session of the General Conference in this room on the 25th of October and I wholeheartedly thank everyone who accepted our invitation and experienced the sample of the rich Mongolian cultural heritage.

The Government of Mongolia is satisfied with the results of the first official visit to Mongolia by the Director-General of UNESCO Madam Irina Bokova. Her visit coincided with a number of important events in the history of the Mongolian people, the Centenniel of our independence, ninety years of the people’s revolution and fifty years of Mongolia’s membership in the United Nations, to name a few. This official visit further deepened the fruitful cooperation between Mongolia and UNESCO and culminated with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation which the Government of Mongolia is fully committed in successfully implementing in collaboration with UNESCO.

As the Chair of the Community of Democracy, Mongolia plans to organize an international seminar on education of democracy next year and we are confident that UNESCO will actively work with us on this initiative.

We are on the eve of marking 50 years of Mongolia’s membership in UNESCO and the Government of Mongolia plans to organize various events throughout next year to showcase the productive 50 years of cooperation between the Government of Mongolia and UNESCO.

Madam President,

Mongolia, like many others, believes that the economic hardships and complexities should not affect investments in the educational sector for a simple reason that this is a source
of our future and sustainable development. Less than four years separate us from achieving the six internationally agreed education goals. In this regard, I express my sincere support of UNESCO’s activities in promoting Education for All. In order to achieve the six Dakar goals, Mongolia sets its priorities in the promotion and advancement of access and quality of education, literacy and life-long education and vocational training.

The Government of Mongolia has adopted and is in the process of implementing the Master Plan for Development of Education for 2006 to 2015 which spells out the vision, policy objectives, implementing strategies – including institutional mechanism, and estimated resources for implementing sector reform.

At the initiative of Mongolia, the UN General Assembly has proclaimed the period of 2003-2012 as the United Nations Literacy Decade. We have only one year left before the end of the Decade and I would like to express our sincere gratitude to all Member States that have actively supported our initiative. There has been considerable improvement in the realm of literacy, however, illiteracy remains a particularly alarming problem among adolescent girls and women of whom constitute two-thirds of the many hundreds of millions of illiterate people. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the initiative of UNESCO for launching the Global Partnership for Girls’ and Women’s Education in May this year.

As we reach the end of the United Nations Literacy Decade, my delegation reiterates the importance of having a separate international gathering that would consider the outcomes of the Decade and outline the post Decade plan of action. In this connection my Government expresses its gratitude for the gracious invitation made by the Government of Thailand to organize such a conference in 2013.

Madam President,

Cultural sphere is an area where cooperation between Mongolia and UNESCO is developing with an increasing pace. Next week marks the tenth Anniversary of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and on this occasion I am pleased to announce that the Government of Mongolia has completed the translation of the Executive Summary of UNESCO World Report “Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue” into Mongolian language and presented the completed work to Madam Director-General earlier this week. Government of Mongolia remains committed in its efforts to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions as well tangible and intangible cultural heritages.

Madam President,

My delegation supports Madam Director-General’s aim to increase UNESCO’s role and participation in the field of science and to transform UNESCO into a lead international scientific organization as timely and appropriate. Climate change, drought, land degradation, desertification, shortage of water reserves have emerged as one of the gravest challenges facing humankind. Incidences of mega-disasters occur all too often. There is an urgent need for strengthening disaster preparedness to prevent debilitating outcomes in the future and to develop and implement disaster risk management programmes and projects efficiently by
providing technical and professional services in formulating national disaster management policies.

My delegation commends Director-General’s commitment to “reform to perform” and supports the efforts to reform the organization in its main strategic directions so that it could perform in a more efficient and effective manner.

Thank you.