

**Justifications for taking “Gulzat” surrounding under the local protection**

According to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> provisions of 28, 29<sup>th</sup> articles, respectively; and taking into the account the decree No. 07 of Minister of Nature and Environment on Taking land under the local protection from 10<sup>th</sup> January 2000 decisions on bringing some land under the local protection. Within the territory of Sagil soum places as Khargait, Buraatiin Uul, surrounding of Tsagaan gol of Sagil soum and within Bukhmoron soum places called Uushig, Khurmast, Gun Sair, Khokh Sair, surrounding of Gurvan Jigertei have been included to the list as a main representative of the different natural belts and zones. Those territories were proposed to be included into the Russia – Mongolia joint protected lands, however, the justifications were not really scientific and this process were postponing for a long time. Aimag community and government selcted the important areas respectively to the different natural resources and decided to bring under the local protection.

The Gulzat locally protected area is occupying 267.72 sq.km or 126772 ha area in total and is a part of territory of Sagil and Bukhmoron soums. The following are main justifications to bring of territory under the protection:

1. The land is a habitat for Argali sheep which are habiting in Uureg lake depression, Bairamiin uul mountain, north west to Bayan Uushig Uul Mountain, north to the Uushgiin Ulaan Mountain, and east to the Atsat Khariin Nuur mountains.

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) - Mongolian Programme Office started the implementation of the monitoring survey on migration of Argali sheep, influence of domestic animal on Argali sheep grazing land and dynamics of their population along the transboundary area since April of 2005. According to the results of this monitoring in a territory of Bukhmoron and Sagil soum on 453 sq.km area along the transboundary area of Mongolian part 220 – 240 Argali sheep counted in total. This is equal to 23.5 % of total population of Argalisheep garzing along the Russia – Mongolia boundary.

Surrounding Tsagaan gol, which were decided to be brought under the local protection, is main area for Ugalz or Mature males, whilst Mandakhiin Aarag uul is main regeanaration region for most of the populations of Argali sheeps. Gurvan Jigertei is corridor for Argali sheep to move from one to another border. Unfortunately, since 2000, the trophy hunting occurs in those important area causing damages for Argali sheep population. For instance, surrounding hunter-tourists’ camp of Altai-Outfitter Co.Ltd. the number of matured males or Ugalz have been decreased or migrated to other places.

In 2003 hunting on Argali sheep within Tsagaan Shuvuut SPA, in 2005 in 100 km from borderline in Atsat Khar Uul mountain illegal hunting

permissions for foreign hunters were given. There many such stories on law violations in this region.

Taking into account that the number of the matured Argali sheep is decreased Uvs aimag Citizen's Representatives decided to forbid hunting for 1 year and Minister of Nature and Environment also developed decree on ban hunting for not less than 2 years. The rational use of the hunting resources and wildlife, thus, a concern of local authorities and government as well. In this period the capacity for protected areas and their operation should be strengthened.

2. According to the Law on Environmental Protection, which were renewed in December, 2005, to support community-based environmental conservation the provisions enabling and opening opportunities for herders groups/communities on rational use of resources and protect the environment. To protect the argali sheep it is need to establish self-financing or self-supporting system through collecting all the benefits and taxes come from the illegal hunting. Establishing such mechanism protection can assist to development of the community based rational use and conservation of nature and environment.

Trophy hunting developed for 40 years, unfortunately, within this period it was not benefited rural population by strong rational use and protection activities. This can be explained as the specialized organization/agency took over the organization of such activities. From one side it is satisfies the foreign investors and tourists requirements, but from another side it is not build and conservation attitude for surrounding and users. In other words, local population doesn't receive wildlife as their resource and doesn't care about it thinking in mind that it is a resource of certain company and this is not a secret anymore. Since 2000, in a territory of Uvs aimag 5-7 ugals are permitted (through issuing licenses) to be hunted in a year. Since the use of resources in a place selecting and implementing the rational use type and promoting community based hunting management could support to the process of environmental conservation and sustainable use of resources. Developing tourism through rational use of rare wildlife species could support rural development and livelihood are defined us one of justifications.

3. In total, 232.76km<sup>2</sup> or 67.41% of grazing land of Argali sheep in Tsgaan gol experiences coincidence with the domestic livestock grazing owned by 97 herders' households. In other words, more than half of a natural habitat of Argali sheep is threatened by the human interactions.

In Mandakhiin Aarag place of Bukhmoron soum totally 52 herders' households are living, of which 31 for wintering, 17 for summering and 2 for spring. The winter places of households or their pastureland occupies 52.6 % or 94.8 km<sup>2</sup> of Argali sheep habitat. Those are the nesting place for female Argali sheep mostly used for 15 April and 1 May. Because of the grazing land coincidence between wildlife and domestic animal it is requires specific measures as rotation use of grazing land and/or zonation of pastures.

4. The region is a main area of migration of Snow Leopard habiting along the Mongolia – Tuva transboundary. It is needed to conduct detailed research within this migration area as well as to bring those under the protection.
5. In foot slopes of Mandakh Aarag Mountain along the gullies and wind down sides of hills and mounds the northern most population of Gazelles (*Gazelle subgutorosa*) with 40 heads in total are habiting. Gazelles are listed in Mongolian red book of rare and endangered species; therefore, to protect those animals taking under the local protection is a main justification.
6. The region is a rich by the Mongolian marmot and assessed as the largest resources for Uvs aimag concentrated here. Due to irrational hunting the number of population of marmot drastically decreased over the last few years. Taking this land under the local protection, therefore, will be justification for long-term rational use and conservation of the Mongolian marmot.
7. In relation to the Global Warming many of rivers and lakes are dried up resulting land degradation and desertification issues. Protecting rivers and springs from the mountains, rational use of resources, therefore, are the main justifications.
8. Protect historic monuments with ages of late Mesolithic and early Neolithic, represented by handcrafts, memorials, burials and historic artcrafts including Mojo, Buja, Gulzat petroglyphs and Ikha Saran archery petroglyph.
9. The mining sector is a promising industry in country development strategy. Currently in and around Tsagaan Gol, downstream of Tsagaan Gol, southern from Shar Tolgoi, surrounding of Khargait mountain, Gurvan jigertei some licensees are issued. In a future do not issue any licenses within above mentioned lands.
10. Do not reissue expired licenses and do not extend the duration of the currently used ones.