



**My name is Tugsbilguun Tumurkhuleg and I am an officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Mongolia. Before going to study in Australia I served for two and half years at the Mongolian Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand. Prior to that I worked for several years in different departments of my Ministry.**

From February 2007 to December 2008 I undertook the Master of Arts (International Relations) at the Australian National University on an Australian Development Scholarship offered by AusAID. My program of study consisted of one-semester bridging program and three semesters of the actual master's program. In the last semester of my program I wrote a thesis entitled "Does the Shanghai Cooperation Organization represent an example of a military alliance?" which received a high distinction mark. In December 2008 I graduated from ANU with a MA degree with honours.

Studying in Australia provided me with a great opportunity to broaden my knowledge of the field of International Relations and more particularly international security and the Asia-Pacific studies. During my stay in Australia I endured a host of challenges starting from learning how to write an essay and later a thesis in the Western-academic style to learning to live in a different culture as well as adjusting to a new way of life. Although these challenges were not easy they were most exciting and rewarding for me. Comparing the educational system in Mongolia with that of Australia, I must admit that despite having received an adequate knowledge of International Relations studying for my undergraduate degree in Mongolia, at the Australian National University I was exposed to a conceptually and empirically richer academic program as well as a more supportive and stimulating learning environment. Facilities such as excellent libraries, computer laboratories and most importantly, the inspiring, committed and knowledgeable academic and administrative staff were available to help a student. In addition, I would like to particularly emphasize that the tutorial assistance sponsored by the AusAID Liaison Office at the ANU throughout my entire period of study immensely helped me in achieving the motivation to study at the same level with native English speakers.

To sum up, the program that I undertook at ANU exceeded my highest expectations and I am now more confident of my intellectual ability to overcome whatever difficulties I may confront in the future. The most important thing that I achieved by studying in Australia is the ability to critically think for which I am deeply grateful to my professors, lecturers and tutors.

Talking about the future, I intend to further work as a diplomat at my Ministry and at the same time I harbour a desire to pursue a PhD in International Relations overseas in the not so distant future.