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Politics

# Consultative meeting on constitutional amendments held

By **Bayarbat Turmunkh** - May 1, 2017

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*Consultative meeting at the State House*

The second survey for the first nationwide poll on constitutional amendments took place at the State House this weekend. The two-day consultative meeting, led by legal experts and a task force studying constitutional amendments, was carried out with nearly 730 individuals randomly selected by the National Statistics Office (NSO) out of an initial pool of round one survey participants.

Representatives from political parties, foreign diplomatic missions, resident representatives of international organizations working in Mongolia, 25 international observers, and nearly 30 domestic observers sat in on the consultative meeting.

In making the meeting's opening remarks, Speaker of Parliament M.Enkhbold highlighted that Parliament will decide on making changes to the Constitution based on results of the second survey. He highlighted the great responsibilities of the selected survey respondents.

The survey respondents were divided into groups of 15, and each group debated one specific topic for over an hour. The groups were permitted to ask the experts in attendance about particular issues before participating in the group sessions.

Six main topics were covered, including creating a bicameral legislature; redefining the president's powers and responsibilities; insuring the balance of power between Parliament and Cabinet;

strengthening, specializing, and making state administrators more independent; enhancing regional administration and governance systems; strengthening discipline and insuring accountability among state officials; and improving the implementation of laws.

Nearly 360 men and 420 women from across Mongolia participated in the survey. D.Dolgorsuren, an 85-year-old resident of Songinokhairkhan District, was the eldest survey respondent. Four 18-year-old respondents were the youngest participants. Nineteen of the survey respondents did not receive a formal education, over 40 respondents were elementary school graduates, over 350 respondents were high school graduates, nearly 240 respondents held higher education degrees, and 115 held college certificates.

During the consultative meeting, one group of respondents emphasized that MPs should be legally held accountable for failing to fulfill their promises made to constituents, stating that voters should have the authority to dismiss legislators.

Dr. Ch.Enkhbaatar stated that having MPs serve as Cabinet members in a parliamentary system is not bad. The legal scholar noted that one-third of the members of Cabinet are MPs, and suggested that the Prime Minister should be a Member of Parliament because Parliament and Cabinet need to work together.

Chair of the General Council of Courts N.Lundendorj pointed out that Parliament needs to monitor Cabinet more effectively, but Parliament cannot take control of Cabinet because of the number of MPs who serve as Cabinet members. N.Lundendorj said that forming a Cabinet without members of Parliament could be of great importance to strengthening discipline and insuring transparency.

The task force in charge of constitutional amendments will present Parliament with consolidated recommendations and conclusions from the second survey by May 6.

The following table breaks down the age and gender of the individuals who were selected to take part in the second survey:

<b>Age</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
18-29	82	75	157
30-39	102	120	222
40-49	76	97	173
50-59	53	81	134
60-69	34	35	69
70+	12	18	30

Total	359	426	785
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