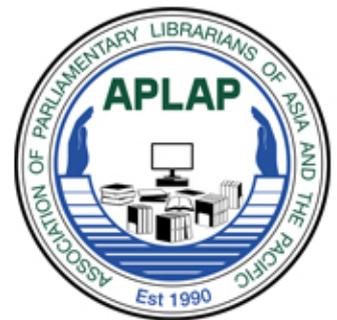


# COUNTRY REPORT: MONGOLIA



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## ***Mongolian Parliamentary library and research service responses to the COVID-19 crisis***

**Amarjargal Dagvadorj MSc,**  
*Research Officer*  
Parliamentary Research Service

**PhD. Bariushanov Ariunaa**  
*Library officer*  
Parliamentary Library

Parliamentary Research Service  
The Secretariat of State Great Khural (Parliament) of Mongolia

For the conference “Enhancing the Responsiveness and Relevance of Parliamentary Library and Research Services During Times of Crisis.”

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### TITLE

Mongolian Parliamentary library and research service responses to the COVID-19 crisis

### AUTHOR

Amarjargal Dagvadorj<sup>1</sup> MSc, PhD. Bariushanov Ariunaa<sup>2</sup>

Parliamentary Research Service, The Secretariat of State Great Khural (Parliament) of Mongolia

<sup>1</sup>Research officer, Parliamentary research service

<sup>2</sup>Library officer, Parliamentary library

State Palace, Sukhbaatar square-1, Sukhbaatar district, Ulaanbaatar-14201

prs@parliament.mn

### ABSTRACT

*The Parliamentary research service of Mongolia was first established in 1990. It runs a Parliamentary library since 1993, providing the Members of Parliament, researchers, and other state institutions with relevant information, reference, and research databases. During the COVID-19 crisis, the library and research service shifted to online hours. Our book lending service expanded 1.5 times than before, accordingly improving the online database at the library. The research service issued vast publications on comparative research and regional policy analysis of COVID-19 response. We aim to equip our library with comprehensive software and hardware solutions, an electronic database, and qualified human resources in the near future. The research service has objectives of producing more internationally accepted evidence-based policy analyses and research. For this purpose, we aim to cooperate closely with international parliamentary libraries and research organizations. (134 words)*

### INTRODUCTION

#### Parliamentary library

The Parliamentary Library is part of the Parliamentary Research Service of Mongolia. The library was first established in 1993 and provides library services to the highest state institutions of Mongolia, including the Parliament of Mongolia, the President of Mongolia, the Government of Mongolia, and their secretariats.

The library has a collection of more than 50,000 books and 988 periodicals collected since 1932 and provides the following services in the state palace through two librarians.

- Reading room service with 20 seats;
- Lending service;
- Research and Information Service: The service of development-related research and information is ready and open to users;
- Bibliographic service: The library prepares references for periodicals and booklets on the agenda of the State Great Hural (parliament) sessions and thematic bibliographies by order from PMs.

The library serves more than 3,000 duplicate users per year. Due to its location in the state palace, library service is not available to the public.

#### Parliamentary research

Although the research service at the Secretariat of the State Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia started in 1990, the current Parliamentary Research Service (PRS) was established in 2019. It constitutes a research unit, training unit, and parliamentary library with a total of 28 staff. The research Unit comprises the

Economy and industry research team, Social policy research team, Environment, food, agriculture research team, and Law and foreign policy research team.

The PRS provides research, training, and library services to the Parliament, Standing Committees, and Member of Parliaments(MP) regardless of party affiliation. The PRS reports directly to the Secretary-General of the Parliament of Mongolia. It covers a variety of policy research and training unit responding to the requests of MPs.

In some cases, the Research Unit provides confidential research analysis, briefing at the request of the MP's, Standing Committees, and the Secretariat. the PRS releases research volumes, the official report, and other materials such as chronicles of the parliament, the handbook for the MPs, and conference proceedings at the end of every regular session of the parliament.

## CHALLENGES AND RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC

### Parliamentary library

We faced similar challenges as other libraries during the pandemic. However, we mobilize our resources to the fullest to keep our library services available throughout the crisis. During the last six months (November 11, 2020 - May 9, 2021), library services and internal activities proceeded as usual, except for the reading room service and planned events, such as open library days.

During the pandemic, our library encountered the following risks and challenges.

- Information providing service is limited to a certain extent;
- Due to financial constraints in 2020, the library fund budget was reduced by 50%;
- The Parliament's Strategic Plan (2020-2024) proposed to build e-library infrastructure. Nevertheless, no investment has been made in this area for the past year due to financial constraints;

The library's response to the pandemic crisis was adequate. We expanded our book lending service. Since November 2020, 378 readers borrowed 1425 library materials, indicating 1.5 times higher than the same period of last year. Moreover, we seek opportunities to use electronic research databases. For instance, this year, we subscribed to the Research For Life database.

Furthermore, we increased the trial use of databases such as Walley and JSTOR for three months without any charge. We cooperated with the Bank of Mongolia, the National Institute of Law, the Open Society Forum, and the Mongolian Chamber of Commerce and Industry to build an electronic database. As for infection control, we purchased a sanitizing device to disinfect the library area and books.

### Parliamentary research

Since the COVID-19 pandemic spread, Mongolia has contained its local transmission for over ten months.<sup>1</sup> Starting from November 2020, the research unit shifted to online working hours until all employees at the state palace are fully vaccinated. In Mongolia, 56% of the population is immunized with at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine as of June 2, 2021.<sup>2</sup>

The Research unit produced a range of publications related to the COVID-19 pandemic on government responses, comparative researches as follows:

- Experience of other countries in reducing the social and economic impact of the Covid-19 epidemic
- Parliamentary proceedings during the outbreak of coronavirus infection: comparative research
- Emergency economic measures against covid-19
- Covid-19 and its impact on the election
- Issues to consider during parliamentary activities in the virtual environment
- An overview of coronavirus related socioeconomic policies around the world
- Analysis and figures of the social and economic situation in Mongolia caused by the COVID-19
- COVID-19 outbreak, clinical practice, and policy: Comparative research
- Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the world economy and the results of the responses: Review of international organizations and IMF

- Lessons learned from easing Covid-19 pandemic lockdown: Analysis of experiences in Asia, the Pacific, and Europe
- Review of COVID-19 vaccine and global consumption
- COVID-19 and the role of the United Nations
- Supporting the fight against pandemic and transparency of its financing concerning corruption indicators

## CONCLUSIONS

Despite the pandemic's impact on libraries and library users, demand for substantial information access has been increased. Therefore, the book lending service and online services have risen dramatically. Against the backdrop of all this, the library needs to focus more on introducing electronic databases and online services. As part of the work to build the e-library infrastructure outlined in the Parliament's Strategic Plan (2020-2024), we plan to carry out the following activities in stages.

- Comprehensive software solution;
- Comprehensive hardware solution (server, information security);
- Defining the scope and priorities for creating an electronic database;
- Increasing qualified human resources.

We aspire to become a strong think tank service with internationally accepted evidence-based policy analyses and researches. To this end, close cooperation with international parliamentary research organizations and a regular exchange of experiences is desired. It is also vital that the parliamentary library is equipped with a rich online database of international research articles, textbooks, books, and journals.

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