Mongolia: Strengthening Social Assistance – Synthesis Report
World Bank Social Protection and Jobs Group – February 17, 2021

Most Mongolian households received social assistance (Social Welfare) benefits which in 2019 cost 2.1% of GDP or about 6.8% of the budget. Such assistance is provided almost entirely under categorical programs for children, the elderly, the disabled and women with four or more children without means testing. Although several programs indirectly impact poverty because of the poverty incidence in the target groups, technology in place could more effectively channel resources to the poor and improve the welfare of the poor and vulnerable with limited additional cost. Stronger reductions in poverty could be achieved by tapering additional benefits for poor households including recipients of the Child Money Program, disability and elderly programs. Increasing the coverage and benefit level under the Food Stamp Program can also improve welfare outcomes. Other recommended reforms include measures to strengthen the Integrated Household Database and proxy-means testing, introduction of activation measures, and establishment of a framework for adaptive social assistance in the face of economic and climatic shocks.

I.   Introduction

This note summarizes the key messages of recently completed analytical work on social assistance programs and targeting.[1] The note and supporting technical papers represent the first review of social assistance by the World Bank to follow the 2015 World Bank report: *Review of Program Design and Beneficiary Profiles of Social Welfare Programs in Mongolia*.

This assessment comes at a key moment in the evolution of social assistance (SA) in Mongolia – The benefits of several social welfare programs have been dramatically increased in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic slowdown.[2] Moreover, the authorities are in the process of materially revising the existing Social Welfare Law, Pension Insurance Law and other Social Insurance laws. The messages and analytical results are therefore useful in the drafting of revisions to these important laws.

Mongolia's Long-term Development Policy: Vision 2050 (2020) has established concrete policy directions for making the country's social assistance system more relevant and inclusive and increasing benefit adequacy to impact on the lives of the poor and the most vulnerable. The SA system is at a turning point. First, the government recognizes the need for changes in the system, including the rationalization of some programs and the necessity to increase their welfare impact through the improved targeting of vulnerable groups, especially the poorest. Second, the Ministry of

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[1] See World Bank, *Mongolia Social Assistance Programs (2020), and The Integrated Household Database System for More Effective Social Assistance in Mongolia (2020).* This note has not focused on delivery systems analyzed in *Mongolia Social Assistance Delivery Systems (2020).* This is the first review to follow the 2015 World Bank report: Review of Program Design and Beneficiary Profiles of Social Welfare Programs in Mongolia.

[2] The term Social Welfare is used by Government authorities which is interchangeable with the term Social Assistance.

Labor and Social Protection (MLSP) is currently working on preparation of draft amendments to the Social Welfare Law, that sets principles for the social assistance system and regulates most social assistance programs.

In addition, this note comes at a time when the need of having an efficient social assistance is more relevant and urgent that ever before with the COVID -19 pandemic. Recognizing the need to immediately support its economy and workforce, the GoM established a substantial stimulus package of US$1.8 billion (13 percent of GDP) in March 2020, including, among other measures, temporary relief to COVID-19 affected entities and workers (1.6 per cent of GDP). The second stimulus package, announced in May 2020, included temporary increase of the benefit size for the CMP, FSP and social welfare pensions (1.5 per cent of GDP).[3]

II.   Performance and key challenges in Social Assistance

A. Cost, coverage and poverty impact

Mongolia's social welfare expenditures represented 2.12 percent of GDP in 2018, which is far above the regional average (1 percent of GDP in East Asia) as well as the average for the lower-middle-income countries (1.4 percent). Social assistance spending in Mongolia has been stable over the last 5 years, hovering around 2 percent of GDP.

Current social assistance programs are almost entirely categorical, although the target groups do have significant poverty incidence.   Most programs are categorically targeted, providing support to children, the elderly, the disabled, and women with 4 or more children. Only one program, the Food Stamp Program (FSP) is targeted exclusively at the poor yet this program covers a small part of the poor and the benefit level is too low to meaningfully reduce the poverty gap**.**[4] The Child Money Program (CMP) is a universal program that does provide disproportionate funding for the poor simply because the poor tend to have more children.

Coverage of the poor by any program is high, with almost the entire poorest population living in the bottom quintile of the welfare distribution receiving at least one social assistance benefit (98.6 percent). This is much higher coverage than in other comparator countries. Overall, about 53 percent of the population directly receives social welfare benefits while 87 percent receive benefits directly or indirectly (that is, those who live in a household in which there is a least one direct beneficiary).[5]

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[3] All of the expenditure data and household survey data in this note is from 2018.

[4] The limited impact of the FSP in addressing poverty is driven by its low coverage of the poor (17.2 percent) and low benefits (an average transfer equivalent to about 4 percent of the poverty line). In the absence of the FSP, poverty would increase by a small 0.2 percentage points.

[5] In this note, coverage refers to direct and indirect coverage, unless otherwise noted.

The limited impact of SA transfers in lifting the poor out of poverty is in large part due to the limited adequacy of the level of benefits (Figure 1).[6] The highest level of transfer to the poor is under the Social Welfare (SW) Pension. The SW pension benefit size is MNT 188,000 (temporarily increased to MNT 288,000), which for a household represents about 32 percent of the poverty line. The caregiver allowance and the CMP programs represent 9 and 6 percent of the poverty line respectively, while the FSP average benefits reach only 4 percent of the poverty line.

Figure 1: Average amount and level of transfer to poor households, per SA program and in % of poverty line
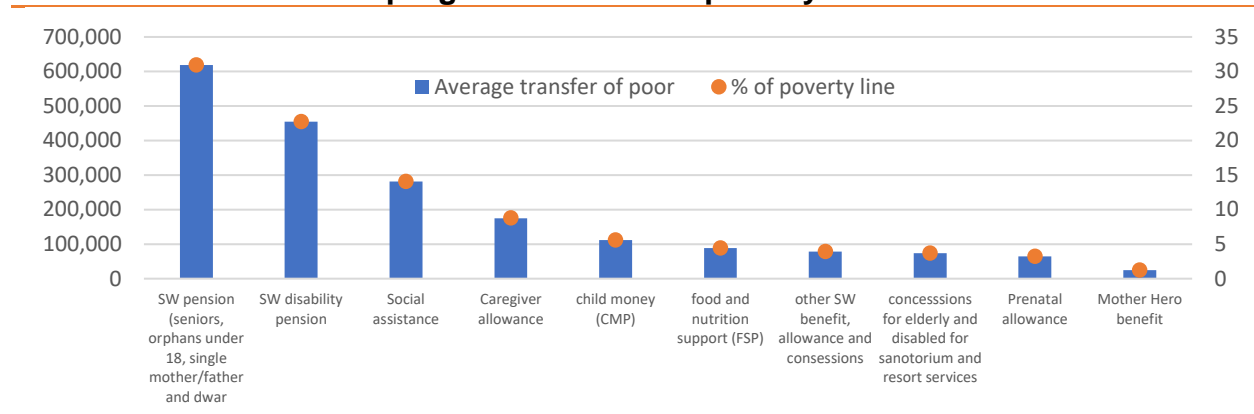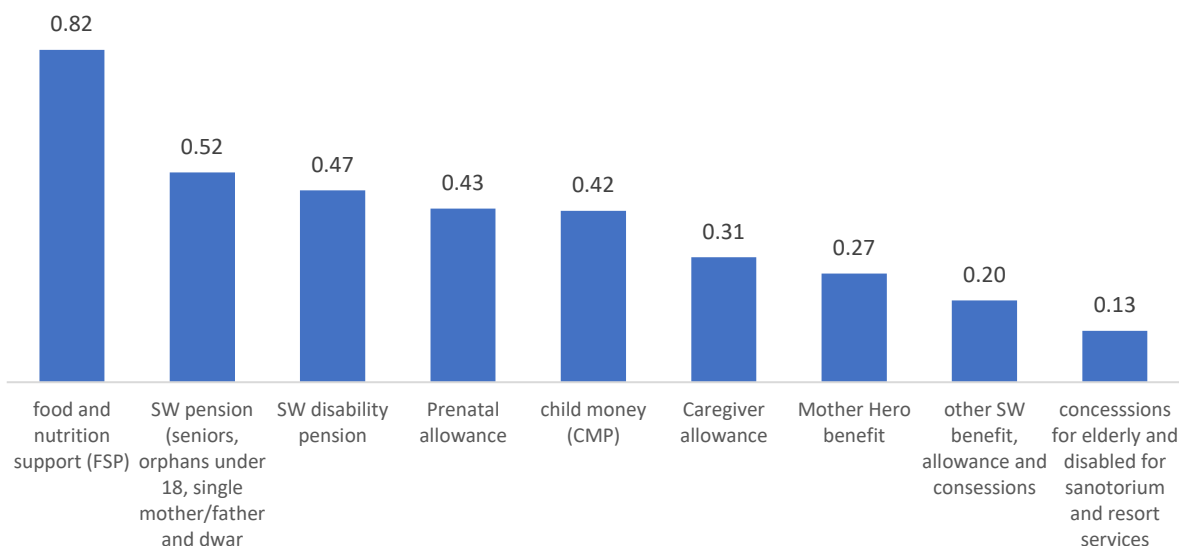

Source: Authors' calculations based on HSES 2018

Although some programs are able to have a modest impact on poverty, supplementing benefits to recipients in poor households could substantially improve the cost effectiveness of reducing poverty. For example, the largest poverty impact of programs is achieved by the Child Money Program (CMP - the largest program), with 7.4 percent reduction in poverty, which is not surprising given that the program's budget. Even though the average transfer of the CMP is small (4 percent of poverty line) the coverage of the poor is so large (90.3 percent), that the benefits allows those close to the poverty line to escape poverty. Yet the benefit-cost ratio for the CMP program suggests that each MNT of assistance only reduces the poverty gap by about 0.42 MNT (Figure 2). Supplementing the basic CMP benefit for those children in poor households or tapering the benefit to the beneficiary's economic circumstance would be a cost-effective means of reducing poverty in recipient households. The coverage of the poor for this benefit is relatively low (13.6 percent) but since the transfer is relatively large (23 percent of poverty line), the benefit can contribute to lift many of the few poor covered out of poverty. In principle, the same tapered approach could be applied to supplementing the Social Welfare Disability Pension which has a benefit-cost ratio of 0.42. In principle the same approach could be considered for other benefits such as those for elderly and disabled concessions or for Mother Heroes.

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[6] All of the benefit amounts cited are prior to the March 2020 increase.

Figure 2: Benefit-cost ratio of social assistance

Source: Authors' calculations based on HSES 2018

Since the FSP is already targeted towards the poor, the impact of this program on poverty reduction could be cost-effectively strengthened by increasing the coverage and benefit level. The limited impact of the FSP on poverty (0.5 percent reduction of pre-transfer poverty, about 0.18 percentage points) is driven by its low coverage and low benefits (FSP beneficiaries receive an average transfer equivalent to 4 percent of the poverty line). Yet the FSP has the largest benefit-cost ratio, with 0.82 so that expansion of FSP to more poor and/or an increase of the benefits are efficient ways to boost its impact on poverty reduction.

Although the level of overall SA benefits is higher for the poor than for the rich, it remains too low compared to the poverty line. Overall, the average level of social assistance[7] benefits represents about 205,000 MNT per capita annually (pre-COVID, about $6 USD per month), which represents only about 10 percent of the annual poverty line (1.9 million MNT). Average benefits are higher for lower quintile (progressiveness) with a benefit of about MNT 336,000 for quintile 1 (about three times higher than the average benefit observed for Q5), yet still very low compared to the poverty line. Much of the progressivity is attributed to higher numbers of children amongst those with lower incomes who receive the CMP benefits. The consumption average for those in the bottom quintile is still significantly below the poverty line after the receipt of benefits from all social assistance programs.

The overall benefits are progressive when looking at overall expenditures across the income distribution (Figure 3). This progressivity is driven not by the targeting of programs towards the poor but, rather, indirectly, by channeling benefits to beneficiary

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[7] This represents the average per capita level of transfer for households which are beneficiaries of SA programs, including direct and indirect beneficiaries.

groups which have relatively high incidence of poor or vulnerable populations. For example, poor households tend to have higher numbers of children or families with disability tend to be poorer. The programs are therefore somewhat predictive of poverty and vulnerability on average. However, with the technology that is already in place in Mongolia (the PMT based IHD), one can do much better by providing benefit supplements to beneficiaries in poor or vulnerable households.

Figure 3: Social Assistance Expenditures by Program and Beneficiary Quintile
(Expenditure 2018 by quintile)
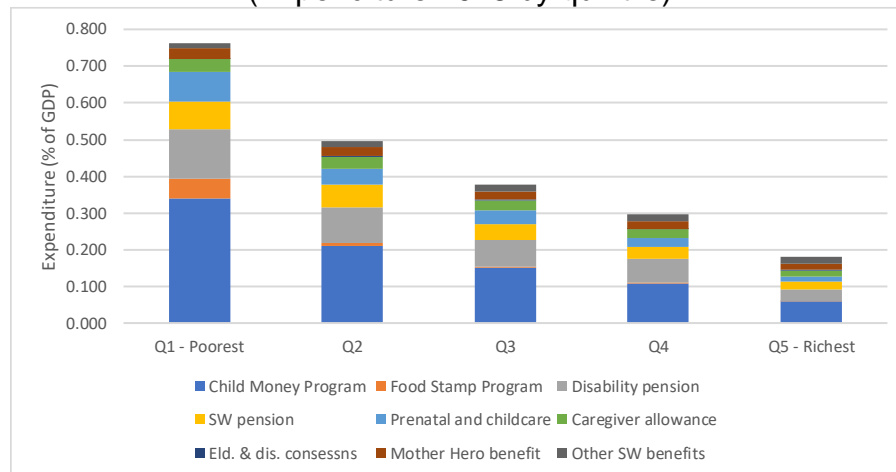
Source: HSES and MOF.

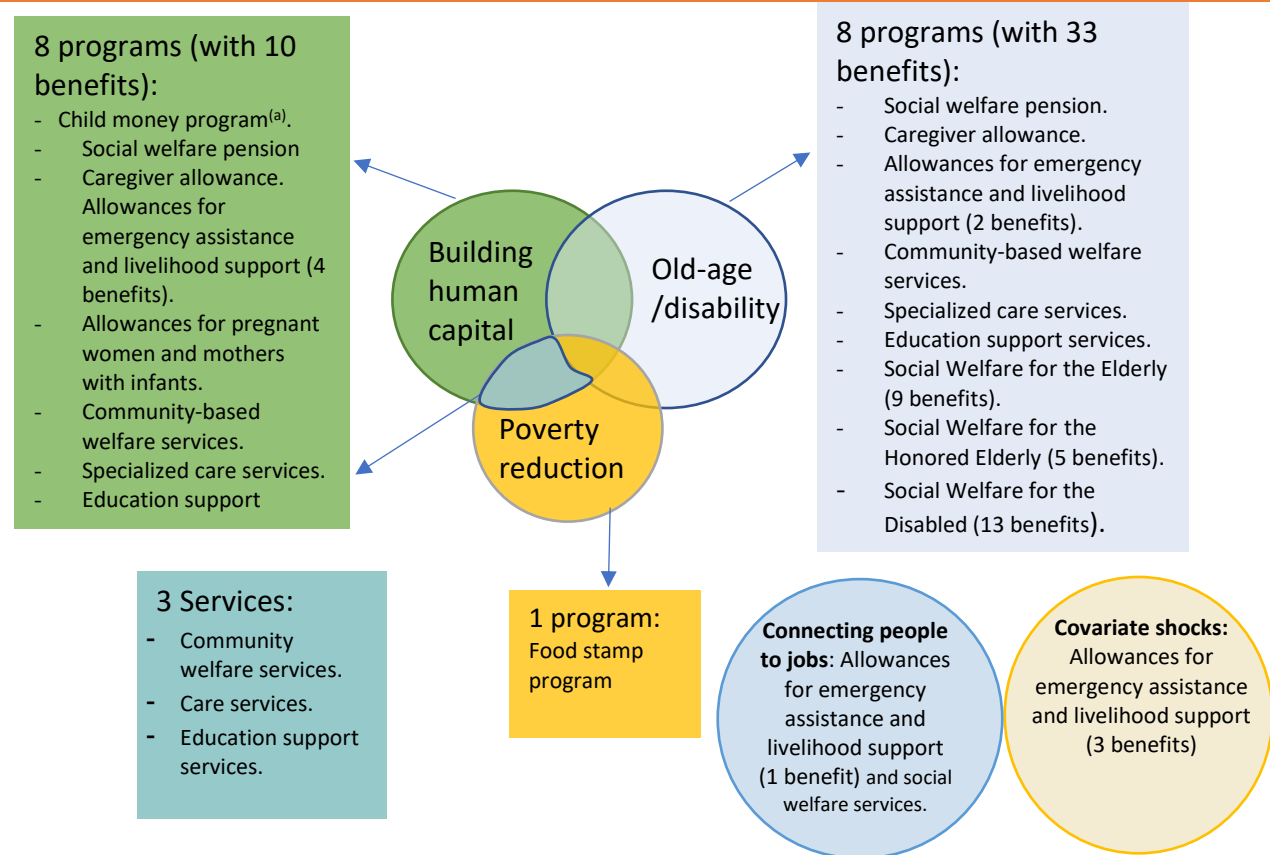## B. Alignment with objectives, duplication and gaps

There is duplication within and across SA programs, gaps between them and a weak alignment with core objectives. There are three main social policy objectives: (i) provide support to those affected by disability and income loss related to old age; (ii) support families to enable human capital accumulation; and (iii) alleviate poverty (Figure 4). Two additional objectives are also present, that is, mitigating the impact of covariate shocks, and connecting people to job opportunities.[8] There are 10 benefits that contribute to building human capital; 33 benefits are to support old age vulnerability and disability; and one program specifically designed to support food nutrition of the poor (see Figure 1). Having many objectives is fine as long as they inform the design of the benefits and are properly monitored and efficiently managed. However, it seems there is no clear results chain or monitoring indicators to assess how well these objectives are in fact served.

The multiplicity of benefits within social assistance programs is a source of inefficiency, duplicating administrative procedures and costs. Payment mechanisms are the same across most benefits, with most made through the banking

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[8] Although this review finds no links between SA and connection to jobs through employment assistance, there is one notable exception: making the allowance for livelihood support conditional on active search for jobs is planned in the revised Social Welfare Law.

system, except for the FSP in rural areas where the transfers are made through coupons. However, the application procedures and identification of beneficiaries may differ, especially for the fee-waivers, that require specific applications according to the type of items. For example, eligible elderly individuals are entitled to multiple benefits and fee waivers according to specific circumstances (fee waivers for transport costs if medical treatment is located in remote town; specific benefits depending on the type of honors received; housing fees if living alone with no family, and so on). The entitlement is not automatic and requires specific application procedures which is administratively costly and imposes extra costs on claimants as well. There are also numerous programs for the disabled, including a social welfare pension if their work incapacity level is higher than 50 percent. They are also entitled to allowances for livelihood support if they need permanent care — the condition fulfilled by many disabled. Additionally, the disabled are entitled to 11 other benefits (mainly fee-waivers) under the social welfare program, eligibility for which depends on circumstances and type of disability. Finally, there are some important duplications between the social welfare pension for single parents and the CMP for the same households. For instance, a single mother with 4 children could be entitled to the following benefits: (i) the CMP; (ii) the social welfare pension for single parents; (iii) the Mother Hero benefit (as a mother of 4 or more children); (iv) the monthly benefits for mothers (not working) and looking after a child under the age of 3; and (v) the FSP (if below the PMT threshold).

Figure 4: Mongolia Social Assistance Programs (by stated objectives and target groups)

8 programs (with 10 benefits):
- Child money program[a].
- Social welfare pension
- Caregiver allowance.
  Allowances for emergency assistance and livelihood support (4 benefits).
- Allowances for pregnant women and mothers with infants.
- Community-based welfare services.
- Specialized care services.
- Education support

8 programs (with 33 benefits):
- Social welfare pension.
- Caregiver allowance.
- Allowances for emergency assistance and livelihood support (2 benefits).
- Community-based welfare services.
- Specialized care services.
- Education support services.
- Social Welfare for the Elderly (9 benefits).
- Social Welfare for the Honored Elderly (5 benefits).
- Social Welfare for the Disabled (13 benefits).

Building human capital

Old-age /disability

Poverty reduction

3 Services:
- Community welfare services.
- Care services.
- Education support services.

1 program: Food stamp program

Connecting people to jobs: Allowances for emergency assistance and livelihood support (1 benefit) and social welfare services.

Covariate shocks: Allowances for emergency assistance and livelihood support (3 benefits)

Source: Authors' schematic based on Mongolian laws and administrative data.

Social assistance is designed and administered via a complex system with various eligibility conditions and application processes. Overall, there are 16 social assistance programs (deriving from the different laws) which provide more than 40 different kinds of benefits, 20 of which provide cash transfers and the rest in-kind or service. This contributes to administrative inefficiency and creates a burden for social workers. The multiplicity of benefits may also undermine the transparency of the system, as individuals may not be aware of what they are entitled to; at the same time, the complexity of applications may discourage them from claiming what they could receive.

There are very weak links between social assistance and activation measures. There are no linkages or incentives in SA programs to join or return to the labor market. Only homeless beneficiaries of the allowances for emergency assistance and livelihood support are required to look for work. In order to promote the economic inclusion of all work-capable beneficiaries, such conditions need to be extended to other benefits. Moreover, childcare services for poor families could, in principle increase relatively low female labor force participation amongst women aged 20-34. Efforts should also be made to encourage the disabled (those with some working capacities) to join labor force.

Finally, there are limited conditionalities are established as incentives for beneficiaries.[9] For example, although the Child Money Program (CMP) supports human capital and contributes to reducing poverty, the program fails to leverage the synergies between the two objectives by establishing conditionalities such as health visits or school attendance. There is also scope for empowering social workers to refer beneficiary recipients to employment services, including business plan development and micro investments. This would help to provide incentives to join the labor market, and to ensure the successful economic inclusion of beneficiaries.

There is also duplication between SA and Social Insurance programs without a systematic means of coordinating eligibility or benefit amounts. The Social Welfare Pension Old Age Benefit is provided only for those who are not entitled to receive an Old Age Benefit under the Pension Insurance scheme. Yet there are many programs which provide duplication such as maternity benefits, disability and survivorship benefits and Mother Hero benefits.

C. Registry system and targeting

Although most of the weaknesses in targeting outcomes stem from policy choices not to means-test benefit eligibility and/or benefit levels, there are nonetheless some weaknesses in the design and administration of the IHD Social Registry and PMT-based targeting system. The IHD provides a strong foundation for a comprehensive registry yet needs to include more program applicants and beneficiaries, including those in programs not targeting the poor. The PMT survey needs to be updated with 2018 data and needs to be supplemented with other targeting methods to increase its effectiveness. Recent advancement in inter-agency data sharing through the *Khur* system has drastically increased the scope of using administrative data in the PMT survey (either proactively or through cross-validation).[10] Real improvements in performance and targeting the poorest come from increasing the eligibility threshold of the social assistance programs - This means that more programs will need to use the IHD and target a larger share of the population.

There are no exclusion mechanisms that would prevent beneficiaries from receiving several benefits for similar purposes.[11] For instance, the disabled could potentially receive several benefits. This adds complexity to the eligibility process, and disadvantages those

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[9] The Food Stamp Program has following conditionalities stipulated by the MLSP/Ministerial decree of 2014 (No. a/32): (i) A working age person with work capacity is required to be registered as a job seeker at employment office, to receive counseling and employment support programs etc; (ii) Having children immunized; and (iii) Having school age children enrolled in formal or non-formal education.

[10] The MLSP is already moving forward with measures to combine IHP and administrative data to strengthen targeting outcomes.

[11] Exclusion mechanisms exist between pension insurance and the Social Welfare Pension, that is, those who are entitled to old-age or disability contributory pensions are not entitled to social welfare pensions.

who lack information. Parents are another group that can benefit from different programs, while sharing similar characteristics.

D. Vulnerability and support for covariate shocks

The Mongolian population is highly affected by various kinds of shocks, including covariate shocks, such as natural disasters, commodity price increases (inflation), and employment shocks (including job losses in times of crises). Shocks may have a long-lasting impact on household welfare, making them more likely to fall into poverty. The global pandemic and recession triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic is an example of a severe covariate shock. From 2013 until 2018, 36 percent of the population was affected by various types of shocks.[12] The most prevalent types of shocks are those related to health and commodity prices, with 16.3 and 16.6 percent of the population, respectively, being affected at least once during this period. Natural hazards and weather shocks affected 4.1 percent of the overall population, with an expected yet striking difference between the capital, urban and rural areas.

In spite of such high incidence of shocks, only 9 percent of households impacted by a shock received Government support, and 21.5 percent of them find it difficult to cope with the shocks.[13] When facing difficulties in coping with shocks, families may be forced to sell their assets and/or reduce their food consumption—all negative coping strategies that make it more difficult to escape the poverty trap. Negative coping strategies may have long-lasting impacts on both asset accumulation and human capital building, which can in turn lead to chronic poverty. Those in rural areas are more likely to adopt negative coping mechanisms as compared to those in Ulaanbaatar and in other urban areas. That is notable given that there are programs that support herders in case of harsh winters and suggests that the coverage of such programs and their capacity to flexibly react to the population's needs are limited.

There is a lack of correlation between most shocks and social assistance - The loss of employment, commodity prices plummeting, and other shocks do not increase the likelihood of receiving social assistance benefits. Weather shocks slightly increase the likelihood of benefitting from a social assistance program, but not the FSP or the CMP. The FSP, which is the only poverty alleviation benefit in the country, does not function as a safety net to any of covariate shock.

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[12] Based on self-reported shocks in HSES (2018), including health shocks (injury, illness, death of a household member), natural disasters (impacting livestock, crops and/or vegetables, as well as property), employment shocks (loss of job or significant drop in household income), price shocks (falls in commodity prices and increases in consumer prices) and others (theft, civil unrest, livestock disease and plague/infestation/crop diseases).

[13] The only benefits explicitly linked to shocks are allowances for emergency assistance and livelihood support (3 benefits) plus a herders' allowance.

### III.   Reform Options and Recommendations

It is possible and advisable to improve the poverty impact of SA programs without increasing the budget. Earmarking scarce resources to the poor through means-testing as well as supplementing some benefits for poor households would likely reduce the level and depth of poverty in Mongolia.

Conceptually, there are three sets of options which, in principle could be considered for each program:

1) **Targeted eligibility**. This option would target program to the poor or vulnerable, possibly using the Bottom 30% of the welfare distribution for means-testing. In this case, individuals in households above the eligibility thresholds would not receive benefits.
2) **Tapered top-ups**. This option would provide supplemental benefits to the poor or vulnerable, while continuing to provide basic level benefits to those beneficiaries in households above the welfare threshold. This option would result in additional budgetary costs which can be effectively estimated.
3) **Tapered benefit levels – top-ups and reductions**. This option would provide supplemental benefits to the poor or vulnerable, while providing reduced benefits to those beneficiaries in households above the welfare threshold. This option would aim to be budget-neutral.

Figure 5 below provides an illustration of the monthly benefits under the existing CMP and the three reform scenarios above. The authorities may want to consider different tapering options for different benefits. In principle, it is possible to use the cost savings by targeting one benefit to offset the additional cost of offering supplemental benefits to poor recipients under another.

Figure 5: Stylized Illustration of Options for Targeted Tapered Supplements
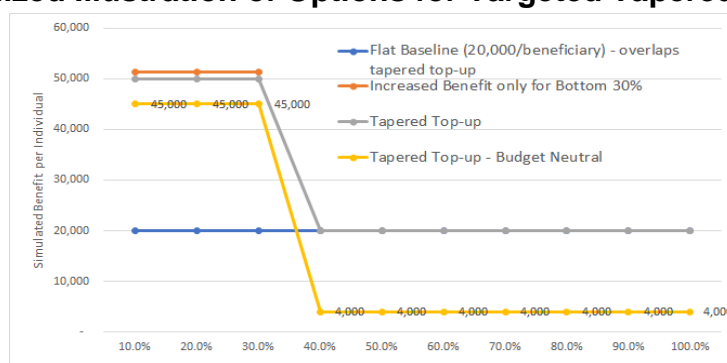
Source: Bank estimates
Note: The Baseline reflects an equal benefit of MNT 20,000 per beneficiary under the CMP (2019 pre-COVID); The increased benefit scenario increases the benefit to MNT 51,282 per month per beneficiary and no benefits are payable to beneficiaries in households above a bottom 30% income/welfare threshold; The Tapered top-up scenario provides a benefit of MNT 50,000 per beneficiary for those in households under the 30% income/welfare threshold and a benefit of MNT 20,000 per beneficiary for those in households above the threshold. This results in additional fiscal costs. The last scenario provides a benefit of MNT 45,000 per beneficiary for

those in households in the Bottom 30% and a benefit of MNT 4000/beneficiary for those in households above the bottom 30%. This is structured to simulate a redistribution of benefits resulting in no additional budgetary costs.

The authorities may choose different options for each benefit. A careful review of the objectives and revision of targeted eligibility and supplementation for the poor could yield a revised portfolio of programs whereby some of the additional costs for programs with supplements are offset by cost reductions for programs restricting eligibility.

There are four areas which we have identified for strengthening the social welfare system, focusing more on poverty reduction and less on building human capital and old-age/disability (Figure 5):

1. **Focus more of the social welfare system on meeting the needs of the poor and vulnerable**.

- Specifying the objectives of poverty protection in the Social Welfare Law and linking cash transfer and service delivery programs to it.
- Introducing means-testing as a means of tapering the benefit levels for several current categorical programs. This could apply to multiple programs including services and concessions for the elderly and disabled and their caregivers.
- Provide supplemental benefits to poor and vulnerable under the CMP (See Box 1).
- Expand the coverage and benefits of the FSP (See Box 1).
- Strengthening support services for the poor including counseling and support for the poor unemployed, those poor with disabilities or long-term health problems, childcare services, and support for the disabled and elderly poor.

2. **Strengthen the social registry (IHD) and targeting system**.

- Expand the number and coverage of programs that use the IHD to register and target program beneficiaries and determine program benefit levels. The IHD should include multiple government programs, even if not targeted towards the poor.
- Utilize the IHD as a dashboard for assessing beneficiaries across programs as well as gaps in coverage.
- Introduce technical changes to strengthen targeting accuracy. This should include using hybrid approaches to supplement the PMT such as employing *community-based targeting* to support PMT selection in rural areas.
- Link the wage and income data used for Social Insurance to the IHD for PMT-based scoring; proactively integrate other administrative databases in PMT survey data collection and employ cross-verification.
- Strengthen the monitoring and grievance systems - design a risk-based investigation system with the support of the MIS; and introduce random audit-checks with punitive actions.

- Introduce information campaigns; notify beneficiaries of sanctions for misreporting; publicize audit-checks and associated punitive actions.
- Make the IHD updating system and process more efficient by expanding the on-demand assessment system in response to changes in family conditions, experience of shocks, as well as regular re-assessment.

Box 1: Simulation of the Effect of Measures to Increase the Impact on Poverty of the Child Money Program and Food Stamp Program

It is possible to substantially improve the poverty impact of SA without increasing the budget. Closing the poverty gap (by extending FSP for instance) would cost an additional 1.69 percent of GDP (SA cost would increase from 2.03 to 3.66 percent of GDP, SIM 1 in Table 4). Several reforms could generate such saving, such as means-testing select categorical programs or reducing programs duplication.

Alternatively, simulations show that by restricting the eligibility of merely two programs (i.e. the disability pension and the prenatal allowance – SIM2 in Table 4) to the bottom 40 percent of the population and using the savings to extend FSP coverage, would almost double the poverty reduction effect of SA spending (reducing poverty in the country from 28.4% to 16.7%).

Table 4. Impact of policy simulations (%)

	Coverage by SA Programs (%)	Poverty rate (%)	SA cost (% GDP)
Current situation	6.7	28.4	2.03
SIM1	28.4		3.66
SIM 2	12.9	16.7	2.17

Source: Authors' calculations based on HSES 2018

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3. Reduce fragmentation, program overlaps & covering gaps.

- Prepare a detailed program and benefit *rationalization strategy* including realigning benefits.
- Align narrowly designed benefit programs with programmatic objectives and have umbrellas of related benefits under program umbrellas with simplified application procedures and eligibility authorization by social workers according to individual circumstances.
- Eliminating overlaps between social assistance programs utilizing a strengthened IHD and between social assistance and social insurance programs including through linking databases.

4. Support citizens in the face of economic and climate shocks

- Establish a framework for scaling up coverage and benefits of existing SA benefits (with established payment platforms, for example, bank accounts) in the face of identified shocks.

- Establish a rapid-response cash transfer benefit with improved PMT-based prequalification.
- Establish rapid supplemental assessments to expand the capacity for eligibility in the face of shocks. Supplemental scoring could make automatic adjustments in eligibility scoring, such as reducing a PMT score by a specified factor based on the magnitude of a shock in a particular area.

Table 2: Mongolia: Social Assistance Matrix of Challenges and Recommendations

Objectives	Protecting the Poor and Vulnerable	Strengthening the Targeting System	Reducing fragmentation, program overlaps & covering gaps	Support citizens in the face of economic and climate shocks
Perfor-mance and Key Challenges	Insufficient targeting of resources towards the poor and vulnerable.	• IHD registers insufficient proportion of the population to be fully effective • PMT-based targeting only used for the FSP.	• Duplication within and across SA programs and gaps between them. • Duplication between SA and SA programs without a systematic means of coordinating eligibility or benefits.	• In spite of high incidence of shocks, only 9 percent of households receive SA support. • SA contingencies not established for shocks.
Specific challenges	• SA programs are almost not targeting the poor and vulnerable. • CMP is a universal. • The FSP targeted towards the poor has insufficient coverage and benefits.	• Technical weaknesses in applying the PMT formula, particularly in rural areas. • Only the FSP uses the PMT-based targeting system. • Authorities have started to validate information in the PMT database against administrative data though more is needed.	• Administrative inefficiency is a burden for social workers. • Beneficiaries cannot easily identify possible benefits & face burdensome application processes. • Weak links between social assistance and activation measures	• IHD coverage is insufficient to be most effective in identifying populations affected by shocks. • Existing programs have no systematic means of scaling up or contingencies for shocks.
Recomen-dations – High-level policies	• SW Law should state the core objectives of SA to protect the poor and vulnerable. • SW programs should be more strongly linked to poverty protection.	• Utilize the IHD for more programs and to better-target beneficiaries. • Utilize the IHD for tapering benefit levels for categorical programs • Employ the IHD as a dashboard for assessing beneficiaries across programs and gaps in coverage. • Test hybrid approaches to supplement the PMT such as *community-based targeting* in rural areas.	• Prepare a detailed *program and benefit rationalization strategy* incl. realigning benefits. • Align related benefit programs under common umbrellas; simplify application procedures & eligibility certification. • Eliminate overlaps between SA and social insurance programs.	• Est. framework to scale- up coverage and benefits of existing SA programs during shocks. • Est. a rapid-response benefit w/prequalification & pre-enrollment. • Est. rapid supple-mental assess-ments.
Detailed recommend-dations	• Introduce means-testing for some current categorical programs. • Provide tapered supple-mental benefits to poor beneficiaries in programs such including the CMP. • Increase the FSP coverage and benefit amount. • Strengthen support services for the poor.	• Technical changes to strengthen targeting accuracy. • Link PMT survey data to social insurance and other administrative databases. • Expand the IHD to multiple government programs. • Strengthen the monitoring and grievance systems. • Information campaigns; sanctions for misreporting; publicize audit-checks & punitive actions.	• Exclude receipt of several benefits for similar purposes. • Use the IHT to identify beneficiaries of multiple programs and limits across programs. • Link benefits to activation measures. • Evaluate linking CMP benefits to actions. • Link skills & job readiness programs to the poor, under- or unemployed.	Make better use of the (improved) Integrated Household Database (IHD) system to pre-identify poor and vulnerable for emergency social assistance in the event of specific shocks.