**100th Anniversary since the foundation of Czechoslovakia**

**Opening remarks at the reception**

Jiří Brodský

Mr. Javkhlan, State Secretary Davaasuren, Ambassador Naranbat, Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,

Milí Češi a Slováci,

My wife Hana and I are pleased to welcome you here on the occasion of 100th anniversary since the foundation of Czechoslovakia.

Let me also welcome the Czech Defence Attaché from Beijing. This week, a Czech soldier was killed in Afghanistan and our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family.

We are celebrating 28 October as the day when our democracy and our republic was born. The democratic statehood was discontinued twice, first by the horrors of the Second World War and later by the communist era, but for most of the past century, democracy prevailed in my country and for the past 68 years, Czechs have been close friends with Mongolians (it is not a coincidence that the Czech embassy´s license plate number starts with 04, we were here early and, since the third neighbors are numerous, with certainty, the Czechs can be called your fourth neighbor).

In fact, before 1989, Czechoslovakia was the second most important trade partner for Mongolia and accounted for 6% of Mongolia´s total foreign trade. One of the Mongolian ministers welcomed me, saying “we used to live under the same system” and I reacted: “and we were lucky to see that system collapse and both our countries finding their way to democracy and market economy”. The Czech Republic has stayed with Mongolia and provided continuous support on international fora, as well as in terms of development cooperation and trade. Our friendship is thus not episodical, it has been lasting a lifetime.

Some of you may rightly ask, why we celebrate the foundation of a state that no longer exists. It is because hundred years ago, the foundations of our independent democratic statehood were laid and the ideas and values of the First Republic are those to which we returned in 1989. It is because the Czechs and Slovaks are the two closest nations in Europe, if not in the world, and without Czechoslovakia, neither the Czech Republic, nor Slovakia, would be where they are today.

In the cinema room next door, you can see an exhibition devoted to the establishment of Czechoslovakia that includes the panels in English and Mongolian language about important personalities, foreign policy, economy and culture of the then newly born state. You will also be able to listen to the beautiful tones of music composed by Bedřich Smetana and I am thankful that the talented pupils of the Mongolian state conservatory and private music school Šikulka will be presenting the repertoire they will perform in a few weeks in the Czech city of Pilsen as finalists of Smetana piano competition.

Lastly, let me thank to Pilsner Urquell for providing the Czech beer for today´s event. The city of Pilsen gave its name to all types of pale lagers, the so called “Pils”, all over the world and this beer has even longer tradition than the Republic we are celebrating today.

Let me propose a toast to the next, happier Czech and Slovak century and to our close relationship with Mongolia. Enjoy the evening and the refreshments from Delicatessen café, my and Hana´s favorite.