

**TRANS-ALTAI SUSTAINABILITY DIALOGUE:
GENDER AND SUSTAINABILITY**
13-14 June 2023, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

“INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON TRANS-ALTAI STUDIES”
Plenary 7, 10:45 AM – 12:00 PM

SPEECH OF SHAHIN MUSTAFAYEV, THE PRESIDENT OF THE TURKIC ACADEMY

Excellences, Ladies and gentlemen, honorable guests,

I am happy to be with you here in Ulaanbaatar. It is an honor to be a part of the Trans-Altai Sustainability Dialogue and to address such a distinguished audience.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a roadmap to make countries more sustainable in their economic, social and environmental development. However, it is still challenging for many societies to achieve economic growth that is equally spread to everyone and ensures that no one is left behind.

It is encouraging to see that the discussions at this meeting have focused on eliminating discrimination and violence against women, and achieving equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development.

When all citizens have equal access to products, services, and income opportunities, women are equally represented in government, and institutions are inclusive, and transparent, societies become more peaceful and prosperous.

Let me mention that the Turkic countries' overall cooperation supports equality and women's empowerment. With the adoption of the Turkic World Vision-2040 in couple of years ago, gender issues became an essential component of the collaboration under the Organization of Turkic States umbrella.

I would like to underline that all Member and Observer countries of the Turkic Academy have placed inclusive and sustainable growth targets at the heart of their national development efforts.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This meeting represents a significant opportunity to develop a systematic dialogue on gender and sustainability in Trans-Altai Studies.

From the perspective of Turkic Civilization, Altai has a sacral meaning. Turkic peoples living in the vast geography of Eurasia believe that Altai is the homeland and the origin of Turks.

In academic terms, the common definition of Altaic Studies was initially a linguistic one, assuming a relationship among the Turkic, Mongolian, and Manchu-Tungus language families.

According to Barbara Kellner-Heinkele, whose conception I also share, over the decades, three other basic methodological approaches have been included in this discipline:

- The first approach is represented by linguists who devote themselves to only one of the language families of the Altaic group, be it Turkic, Mongolian, or Manchu-Tungus.
- The second is represented by scholars whose comparative research is not related to linguistics but to other disciplines, such as history, literature, ethnology, and religion.
- The third approach is represented by scholars grounded in one of the disciplines just mentioned, but only within the framework of one of these language families (Turkic, Mongolian, or Manchu-Tungus), or of one language only.

Probably, you will agree with me that Altaic Studies should not be framed with only linguistic studies. We need a multi-disciplinary approach where all aspects of the Turkic, Mongolian, and Manchu-Tungus people should be studied.

On the other hand, Altaic Studies cannot be related only to the mentioned people. Geographically speaking, the Altai Mountains are shared by China, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and Russian Federation.

Therefore, in my view, Altai is a region that acts as the nexus where different cultural and religious entities interact. Trans-Altai Studies shall include this reality and cover all aspects of the area from the approaches of all branches of Social Sciences.

This approach is also supported by the Permanent International Altaistic Conference (PIAC), which became a robust international platform that gathers scholars interested in Altaic and Central Eurasian studies. Let me share with you that the Turkic Academy is one of the supporters of the 65th Annual Meeting of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference, which is to be held in Astana this year on 30 July – 4 August.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would also like to mention Mongolia's engagement in Turkic Academy activities. As you know, the territory of Mongolia is one of the sacred lands which preserves the rich historical heritage of the Great Steppe nomads.

In 2014, the Turkic Academy signed a Memorandum with the Institute of Archeology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences. Since then, our collaboration has achieved several scientific successes from joint archaeological expeditions in Shiveet Ulan (2016-2019), Hushoo Tsaidam (2018), and Nomgon (2019, 2022) regions of Mongolia.

Last year, an archaeological discovery in the Mongolian Arkhangai region (Nomgon Plain) was a unique one, made after 130 years since the Orkhon monuments. Our joint archaeological expedition discovered the memorial complex and the part of the inscription belonging to the Gökturks period.

The scholars of the Academy have detected 19 lines of ancient Turkic, six lines of Sogdian, and the 3-5 lines of Brahmi texts engraved on the inscription. The preliminary inspections suggested that the ritual complex and the inscription may be built in honor of Eltersh Qutlug Qaghan, the founder of the Second Turkic

Khaganate (reigning 682-692) and the father of the famous Bilge Qaghan (683-734) and Kultegin (685-731), who restored the Turkic independence and statehood. We will continue next month with the archaeological works on this memorial complex and try to provide more scientific proof related to discovery.

Before I conclude, I can say that one of the missions of the Turkic Academy is to be an intellectual bridge between Mongolia and the Turkic World. We have engaged Mongolian academic institutions and scholars in our different activities. We are also developing a dialogue and collaboration with Mongolian authorities.

We wish and expect Mongolia to become an observer state of the Turkic Academy. Such status would give new impetus to Mongolia's relations with the Turkic World.

Thank you for your attention!