

Turkmenistan Partners with UNDP and British Embassy in Ashgabat to Host Creative and Innovative Economy Forum

Ashgabat, 14 March 2025 – The International Forum “The Creative and Innovative Economy of Turkmenistan” held in Ashgabat, to mark the declaration of 2025 as the International Year of Peace and Trust, successfully concluded today. This event held from 13-14 March 2025 was organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the British Embassy in Turkmenistan in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Turkmenistan and the National Commission of Turkmenistan for UNESCO. The Forum brought together key stakeholders, policymakers, industry leaders, and entrepreneurs to explore strategies for fostering a dynamic and sustainable creative and innovative economy in Turkmenistan.



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Discussions emphasized the transformative power of creativity and innovation in driving economic diversification, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development. Topics covered the modernization of cultural heritage industries, the role of digital technologies in creative growth, investment mechanisms for entrepreneurship, and the importance of inclusivity in innovation.

“Innovation and creativity are key drivers of sustainable development. By fostering the creative economy, Turkmenistan can diversify its economy, generate employment, and empower the next generation of entrepreneurs,” stated UNDP Resident Representative in Turkmenistan, Ms. Narine Sahakyan. ***“UNDP remains dedicated to supporting the country’s vision for a dynamic and inclusive innovation ecosystem. Together with our partners, we are proud to organize this important event, which serves as a platform to shape Turkmenistan’s vision for creative and innovative economic growth, identify new opportunities, and attract investments for a more prosperous future.”***

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By fostering dialogue and sharing international best practices, the Forum laid the foundation for stronger support systems, enhanced private sector engagement, and a more innovation-driven economic landscape. Special focus was placed on empowering women and youth in the creative sector, ensuring that the industry becomes a catalyst for inclusive growth and equal opportunity.

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"I am delighted that the UK is supporting this Creative and Innovative Economy Forum. The UK Government recognizes the significant contribution the creative industries bring to the UK economy," said H.E. Stephen Conlon, His Majesty's Ambassador to Turkmenistan. ***"It generates £125 billion in gross value and employs 2.4 million people. As the UK Minister of Culture has said, 'From film and fashion to music and advertising, our creative industries are truly world-class and play a critical role in helping us deliver on this Government's mission to drive economic growth in all parts of the UK.'"***

Ahead of the Economy Forum, a pre-forum event on Developing the Creative and Innovative Economy was held at the Ish-Nokady co-working space. The event brought together 100 creators from across Turkmenistan, promoting cross-border knowledge exchange, fostering collaboration, and encouraging open dialogue and partnerships to accelerate the growth of the creative and innovative economy.

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The Forum also featured an Exhibition highlighting Turkmenistan's diverse creative industries, showcasing artisans, designers, and craftsmen who merge cultural heritage with innovation and sustainability. The exhibition displayed both traditional and contemporary works, including textiles, ceramics, jewelry, and decorative arts, as well as cutting-edge robotics displays and creative tourism projects. A fashion show featuring handcrafted garments further emphasized the connection between cultural heritage, creativity, and innovation.

"Today, the development of the creative and innovative economy is becoming a priority on both the regional and global agenda," - noted Dr. Chinar Rustamova, Executive Secretary of the National Commission of Turkmenistan for UNESCO. "In this context, the new project proposed by UNDP and the British Embassy in Turkmenistan, aimed at promoting sustainable economic growth by supporting the development of the creative and innovative economy, is particularly relevant. A vivid example of the partners' commitment to this initiative is today's Forum on Creative and Innovative Economy, which showcases a diverse range of topics—from

the digital transformation of creative industries to the establishment of startup projects”.

Over the two-day Forum, participants made key recommendations to strengthen investment frameworks, enhance digital skills, and promote closer collaboration between policymakers and creative entrepreneurs. Stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment to advancing a vibrant creative economy that drives economic diversification, preserves cultural heritage, and fosters inclusive growth in Turkmenistan.