

**Statement by the ECO Secretary General H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri  
at the International Conference “Iran and Central Asia in the Mirror  
of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mongol and Ilkhanid Era  
alongside of the Silk Road”**

Tehran, IPIS, 1 June 2022

جناب دکتر محمد حسن شیخ الاسلامی،  
رئیس محترم مرکز مطالعات سیاسی و بین‌المللی،  
حضر گرامی،  
خانمان و آقایان،

برایم مایه غایت افتخار است که امروز بنا به دعوت وزارت امور خارجه جمهوری اسلامی ایران فرصت دارم در این کنفرانس مهم بین‌المللی که " ایران و آسیای مرکزی در آینه میراث فرهنگی ملموس و ناملموس عصر ایلخانی در مسیر جاده ابریشم " عنوان دارد شرکت نمایم.

هر باری که سخن در باره دوره ایلخانیان می‌رود بی‌اختیار به یاد نام شاعر بزرگ ما - شیخ سعدی شیرازی و قطعه شعر مشهور او:

بنی آدم اعضای یکدیگرند،  
که در آفرینش ز یک گوهرند.

می آید.

امیدوارم که این کنفرانس که با اشتراک پژوهشگران و دانشمندان شناخته کشورهای گوناگون برگزار می‌گردد به گسترش بیش از پیش همکاری‌های بین‌المللی فرهنگی و علمی سهم‌بازا گذارد.

چنان که معلوم است توسعه همکاری فرهنگی بنا به سند بنیادی سازمان همکاری اقتصادی - پیمان از میر یکی از سمت‌های اصلی فعالیت سازمان است. از این روست که سازمان همکاری اقتصادی و به ویژه مؤسسه فرهنگی آن به مسأله‌های تحکیم رابطه‌های فرهنگی در منطقه توجه خاص ظاهر می‌کند .

حالا اجازت فرمایید کہ ادامہ سخنرانی را بہ انگلیسی کہ زبان رسمی سازمان اِکو است انجام دہم.

**Dr. Muhammad Hassan Shaykh al-Islami, President of Institute for Political and International Studies,  
Distinguished Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am immensely delighted to participate in this important interactive International Conference. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to IPIS for taking this vital initiative. Such events and discussions play significant role in promoting our shared culture, customs, art and literature.

**Distinguished Participants,**

The Mongols made largest empire of the time in our region and facilitated closer connections across Eurasia. Although Mongol conquests initially brought total devastation and affected the balance of artistic production and culture, in a short period of time, Mongols contributed to creation of an environment of tremendous cross culture transfer because of the economic and political relationships they had with the rest of the world.

Mongol policy transferred many craftsmen and educated people to distant parts of the empire, and religious tolerance and merchants also attracted traders. Rather than antagonize conquered peoples by suppressing their religion, the Mongols exempted religious leaders from taxation and allowed free practice of religion whether it be Buddhism, Nestorian Christianity, Manichaeism, Judaism, Daoism or Islam. This policy ensured not only an easier governance of conquered territories but also created an environment of tremendous cultural exchange.

The Mongols adopted a number of Persian customs with an infusion of nomadic values and traditions of Central Asia. The Mongols culturally enhanced the Silk Road by allowing people of different religions to coexist. The merging of peoples and cultures from conquered territories brought religious freedom throughout the empire.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

During the Ilkhanid period, especially in Iran, new ideas and themes were introduced into the stock of the Muslim art, textiles, literatures, foods as well as structures of buildings. The lavishly decorated Ilkhanid summer palace at Takht-i Sulaiman, a site with pre-Islamic Iranian resonances, is an example of secular architecture. The outstanding Tomb of Uljaitu in Sultaniyya is the architectural masterpiece of that era. Following their conversion to Islam, the Ilkhanids built numerous mosques and Sufi shrines in cities across Iran and Transoxiana. In fact, Ilkhanid era has been one of the most influential eras in Iranian history and has considerably impacted social life of Iranians.

The commercial development in the Ilkhanid era, being directly connected with the Mongol might in their vast empire, embodied the development of the commercial routs and main part of the commercial activities was along the Silk Road. Facilitating long-distance commercial activity, the Silk Road not only helped in boosting trade volume as the exotic and valuable goods were transported over long distances but also served as a conduit for the dissemination of ideas, knowledge, and technologies through the back and forth movement of merchant caravans and hence the Silk Road developed commonalities in terms of religious philosophies, literature, arts, languages and culture.

## **Excellencies,**

This ancient time-tested theory of building prosperity through Economic Cooperation was envisioned and envisaged in the Treaty of Izmir and subsequently translated into action through the establishment of the Economic Cooperation Organization, an Organization committed to the cause of regional cooperation for economic development. Since its creation, the Economic Cooperation Organization has traversed a path which has proven to be an arduous one, and yet the Organization has come a long way by making considerable attempts to realize the aspirations of the people and governments of the region.

## **Distinguished Participants,**

In concluding my statement, I would like to reiterate that we firmly believe that this region has great potential and we are strongly committed to support regional countries to help themselves in achieving goals of sustainable socio-economic development and prosperity in the region. Apart from the aforementioned goals, we are also engaged in regional institutional

arrangements through ECO Cultural Institute to enhance visibility of regional culture and preservation of our cultural heritage alongside of the Silk Road.

I thank you for your attention.