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This special issue of the international scientific journal *Turk Eli* has been published based on the proceedings of the International Scientific and Practical Conference entitled "Contemporary Trends in the Development of Education, Science and Innovation in the Eurasian Space: Human Capital, Digital Transformation and Sustainable Development," held on August 4–5, 2026, in the Kyrgyz Republic (Issyk-Kul).

Об этом специальном выпуске

Настоящий специальный выпуск международного научного журнала *Turk Eli* опубликован по материалам Международной научно-практической конференции на тему «Современные направления развития образования, науки и инноваций в Евразийском пространстве: человеческий капитал, цифровая трансформация и устойчивое развитие», состоявшейся 4–5 августа 2026 года в Кыргызской Республике (Иссык-Куль).

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The Role of the Asian Region in the Global Community and Opportunities for Human Capital Development

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Abstract. *This article examines the role of the Asian region in the contemporary global economy and political landscape, focusing on its share in global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), economic growth rates, and the opportunities and prospects for human capital development across the region. It also explores the programs and projects implemented by international financial institutions, including the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as well as the impact of digital transformation and innovation on human capital development. The author argues that Asia's leading position in the global community is closely associated with the region's strategic emphasis on investing in and developing human capital.*

Keywords: *Asian region, human capital, global economy, digital transformation, innovation, sustainable development, World Bank, Asian Development Bank.*

Аннотация. *В статье рассматривается роль Азиатского региона в современной мировой экономике и политической системе. Особое внимание уделяется его доле в мировом валовом внутреннем продукте (ВВП), темпам экономического роста, а также возможностям и перспективам развития человеческого капитала в странах региона. Анализируются программы и проекты, реализуемые международными финансовыми институтами и организациями, в том числе Всемирным банком, Азиатским банком развития (АБР) и Программой развития Организации Объединённых Наций (ПРООН). Рассматривается влияние цифровой трансформации и инноваций на формирование и развитие человеческого капитала. Автор обосновывает положение о том, что ведущая роль Азии в мировом сообществе тесно связана со стратегической направленностью региональной политики на инвестиции в человеческий капитал и создание условий для его развития.*

Ключевые слова: *Азиатский регион, человеческий капитал, мировая экономика, цифровая трансформация, инновации, устойчивое развитие, Всемирный банк, Азиатский банк развития.*

Introduction. During the third decade of the twenty-first century, the global economy and international political processes have undergone profound transformations. The gradual shift of the world's economic center of gravity from the West to the East, together with the growing share of the Asia-Pacific region in the global economy, has become one of the defining trends of our time. Within this context, human capital-encompassing the knowledge, health, professional skills, and creative potential of the population-has emerged as the principal determinant of the competitiveness of countries across the region.

As the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has emphasized, *"Without developing human capital, no country can secure its place in the modern economy."* This article analyzes the role of the Asian region in the global community, its key economic indicators, and the opportunities and future prospects for human capital development within the region.

1. The Role of the Asian Region in the Global Economy

In recent years, Asia has become the principal driving force of the world economy. According to the Boao Forum for Asia, Asia's weighted average real GDP growth is projected to reach 4.5% in 2025, slightly exceeding the 4.4% recorded in 2024. Measured in terms of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), Asia's share of global GDP is expected to increase from 48.1% in 2024 to 48.6% in 2025. Some estimates also suggest that, when measured at market exchange rates, Asia's contribution to global output may reach 36.4%[4].

From a regional perspective, economic growth in 2025 is projected to reach 4.3% in East Asia, 5.9% in South Asia, 5.0% in Central Asia, and 2.9% in West Asia. These figures demonstrate that Asia is not only the engine of the global economy but also one of the world's most stable and dynamic regions in terms of economic development[6].

According to the World Bank, developing economies in East Asia and the Pacific recorded 5.5% economic growth in 2025, while growth is projected to moderate to approximately 4.9% in 2026. These projections indicate that the Asian region continues to maintain relatively high economic growth despite ongoing global economic uncertainty.

Table 1.1. Main Economic Indicators of the Asian Region (2025 Forecast)

Indicator	Value
Weighted average real GDP growth	4.5%
Share of global GDP (PPP basis)	48.6%
East Asia economic growth	4.3%
South Asia economic growth	5.9%
Central Asia economic growth	5.0%
West Asia economic growth	2.9%

Asia also occupies an unparalleled position in global trade and investment. In 2024, global merchandise trade entered a period of recovery, while the integration of Asia's merchandise trade regained momentum. The level of intra-regional trade dependence among Asian economies remained high, with overall regional trade dependence reaching 56.3%. ASEAN member states and China continue to play a central role in Asia's merchandise trade. ASEAN records the highest trade dependence within Asia, accounting for approximately 70%, while the corresponding figures for the Republic of Korea and Japan are close to 60% (59.5% and 58.4%, respectively). In India and China, intra-regional trade dependence stands at 51.2% and 48.5%, respectively[7].

2. Human Capital: A Strategic Driver of Asia's Development

Human capital broadly encompasses the population's level of education, professional skills, health status, and socio-economic productivity. The Human Capital Index (HCI), developed by the World Bank, measures the amount of human capital that a child born today can expect to accumulate by adulthood. The index evaluates access to healthcare, the quality of education, and future employment prospects.

According to the World Bank's Human Capital Index Plus (HCI+) 2025, Asian countries occupy the leading positions worldwide. Singapore ranks first with a score of 0.88, followed by Hong Kong (0.81), Japan (0.80), and the Republic of Korea (0.80). These results demonstrate that Asia's advanced economies are among the world's leaders in human capital development.

Among the Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan ranked 42nd out of 161 countries in the 2025 HCI+ ranking, improving by 13 positions. Kazakhstan achieved a score of 230, outperforming countries such as Argentina (200), Malaysia (201), Georgia (207), Azerbaijan (208), and China (218). Within Central Asia, Kazakhstan remains the regional leader, while Tajikistan scored 138, Uzbekistan 170, Turkmenistan 179, and Kyrgyzstan 198[5].

Table 2.1. Human Capital Index Plus (HCI+) Indicators for Selected Asian Countries (2025)

Country	HCI+ Score	Global Ranking
Singapore	0.88	1
Hong Kong	0.81	2–3
Japan	0.80	2–3
Republic of Korea	0.80	4
Kazakhstan	230	42
China	218	-
Kyrgyzstan	198	-
Uzbekistan	170	-

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report 2025, global human development has reached its lowest level in the past 35 years. However, the Human Development Index (HDI) in the Asia-Pacific region increased by 2.6% between 2019 and 2023, significantly exceeding the global average of 1.5%. During the same period, the HDI reached 0.775 in East Asia and the Pacific and 0.672 in South Asia. Both regions have recorded an increase of more than 50% since 1990.

3. Opportunities for Human Capital Development and International Cooperation

The Asian region offers substantial opportunities for human capital development. International financial institutions, regional organizations, and national governments are actively implementing policies and programs aimed at strengthening education, healthcare, workforce skills, and social development.

3.1. Asian Development Bank Investments in Human Capital

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is one of

the leading financial institutions supporting human capital development across Asia. In December 2025, the ADB approved a US$500 million policy-based loan to Indonesia to support reforms in education, vocational training, healthcare, and social protection systems. In addition, in October 2025, the ADB approved a US$100 million concessional loan to improve the quality of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education in secondary schools in Uzbekistan. This initiative aligns with the ADB's Strategy 2030 priorities, including digital transformation, gender equality, and climate resilience[3].

From 3–5 December 2025, the ADB organized the 11th International Skills and Education Forum in Manila under the theme "Reimagining Human Capital Potential." The forum focused on enabling education systems to respond more effectively to transformational trends and addressing persistent challenges in education and skills development.

3.2. ASEAN Initiatives for Human Capital Development

ASEAN designated 2025 as the "ASEAN Year of Skills," aiming to strengthen regional skills ecosystems, promote labor mobility, and ensure that every worker is prepared for the future economy. In October 2025, ASEAN Member States adopted the Joint Statement on Skills Development for the Future Workforce, reaffirming their collective commitment to regional skills development and workforce transformation.

The ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025 and the ASEAN Declaration on Human Resources Development for the Changing World of Work serve as the principal regional policy frameworks for integrating digital transformation into national education systems and promoting workforce skills development.

3.3. Human Capital Cooperation in Central Asia

The Seventh Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia, held in Tashkent on 15–16 November 2025, marked a new stage in strengthening regional cooperation and strategic partnership. Discussions focused on the development of a common labor market and the enhancement of human capital. Uzbekistan has played an active role in this process by consistently pursuing policies aimed at developing the regional labor market, improving human capital, and promoting the welfare of its citizens.

4. Digital Transformation and Innovation: A New Driver of Human Capital Development

Asia has also emerged as one of the world's leading regions in digital transformation and innovation. According to the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2025, published by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), several Asian economies occupy top positions: the Republic of Korea ranked 4th, Singapore 5th, China entered the global top ten for the first time (10th), Japan ranked 12th, and Hong Kong ranked 15th. Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Oceania became the driving force of global innovation in 2025, with six economies from the region ranking among the world's top 25 innovators[7].

Among the nearly 80 indicators included in the Global Innovation Index, human capital and research constitute one of the most important dimensions. The achievements of Asian countries in this area are among the key factors underpinning their long-term global competitiveness. In particular, China, the Republic of Korea, Japan, and Singapore continue to lead in intellectual and innovation capital, reflecting the global shift of technological leadership toward Asia.

Table 4.1. Asian Countries in the Global Innovation Index 2025

Country	GII 2025 Ranking	Change
Republic of Korea	4	+2 positions
Singapore	5	−1 position
China	10	+2 positions
Japan	12	+1 position
Hong Kong	15	+2 positions

In Uzbekistan, significant progress is also being made in the areas of digital transformation and human capital development. In October 2025, the World Bank approved an US$800 million financial package to support policy reforms aimed at creating jobs, fostering private sector growth, and promoting international trade in Uzbekistan. The human-centered approach embodied in the Government of Uzbekistan's "New Uzbekistan – 2030" Strategy is fully aligned with the development philosophy of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Conclusion. Today, the Asian region has become the focal point of the global economy and international political processes. Asia's projected 48.6% share of global GDP, together with its 4.5% economic growth rate, which significantly exceeds the global average, confirms the region's leading position in the international community.

The foundation of Asia's development lies in its commitment to human capital development. According to the World Bank's Human Capital Index (HCI), Asian economies such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, and the Republic of Korea rank among the global leaders in human capital development. Central Asian countries, particularly Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, have also achieved significant progress in strengthening their human

capital.

Opportunities for human capital development continue to expand through programs and projects implemented by international financial institutions, including the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as well as through initiatives undertaken by ASEAN and the Consultative Meetings of the Heads of State of Central Asia. At the same time, digital transformation and innovation have emerged as powerful instruments for improving the quality and effectiveness of human capital.

The role of Asia in the global community is determined not only by its economic strength but also by its sustained commitment to investing in human capital. By further increasing investments in education, healthcare, digital skills, and innovation, Asian countries will be well positioned to enhance their global competitiveness, achieve sustainable development, and improve the overall well-being of their populations.

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