Bridging Diplomacy and Sustainability

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Alperen Celik



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A Conversation with Halima Rahmatova, Aspiring Development & Sustainability Professional

In a globalized yet ecologically strained world, the intersection of international relations and sustainable development has become a critical frontier for the next generation of policy leaders. Among them is Halima Rahmatova, a communication strategist and master's student in sustainability, specializing in corporate sustainability.

During an EPIS interview conducted by Alperen Çelik, Rahmatova reflected on her trajectory from a self-directed student in Uzbekistan to an aspiring sustainability professional and master's candidate in Geneva. Throughout the discussion, she illuminated the stark realities of international student life, the fragmentation of regional environmental policies, and the crucial necessity of youth integration in global policymaking.

From Uzbekistan to Global Capitals: A Journey of Self-Study

Halima's interest in international affairs began during her school years in Uzbekistan. While she followed a standard educational path, it was her curiosity that led her to explore subjects beyond the classroom. As her interest in global politics and international relations grew, she took the initiative to expand her knowledge independently, developing the skills and perspective that would shape her academic and professional journey. Reflecting on those early years, she notes that she was not initially exposed to many of the educational and international opportunities she would later pursue. Rather than seeing this as a limitation, she viewed it as motivation to seek out new knowledge and broaden her horizons through continuous learning.

This early discipline fostered her core belief that standard academic curricula and rigid exams are inherently limited in their ability to truly broaden a student's vision. Her self-taught foundations eventually propelled her to South Korea, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations and Affairs from the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. Living and studying in South Korea for four years broadened Rahmatova's global perspective. Her studies in international relations focused on global politics, conflict, international development, and contemporary global challenges.

Grounding Sustainability in Practical Action

While completing her undergraduate studies, a sustainable development course led by a professor with a background at KOICA (the Korean International Cooperation Agency) reshaped Rahmatova's career trajectory. Inspired by the prospect of helping developing communities solve deeply rooted social and educational challenges, she chose to narrow her academic lens. This structural pivot led her to Western Europe, where she is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Innovation, Human Development and Sustainability at the University of Geneva.

Rahmatova deliberately selected a program focused heavily on corporate sustainability, sustainable production, and practical execution over dense theoretical frameworks. Her academic work involves analyzing how active corporations can systematically reduce their environmental footprints while maintaining long-term economic stability. This practical application extends directly to her professional experience, including a role as student coordinator at the SDG Solution Space – where she successfully managed international stakeholder outreach for global summer school collaborations – and her work analyzing enterprise metrics using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) at the 4IP Group.

Central Asian Climate Crises and Regional Strategy

A driving factor behind Rahmatova's specialization is the immediate environmental degradation confronting her home region of Central Asia, particularly severe water shortages and agricultural inefficiencies. "Each

summer would get hotter and hotter and less green compared to my childhood," she observed, noting that the visible destruction of biodiversity and resources motivated her to focus her upcoming master's thesis on corporate sustainability in Central Asia.

While acknowledging that Central Asian governments are becoming more receptive to environmental activists and consulting firms, Rahmatova critiques the current landscape as highly fragmented. She argues that segregated, isolated environmental projects significantly dilute operational efficiency, advocating instead for a singular, unified national strategy.

The Power of Audacity and the Reality of Youth Leadership

A recurring theme throughout the discussion was the structural friction between young climate advocates and older, established decision-makers. Rahmatova emphasizes that the youth are fundamentally more concerned with long-term ecological consequences because they will directly inherit the outcomes of current policy choices. She warns that ignoring the perspective of younger generations creates a dangerous political disconnect, which can drive frustrated communities toward public unrest and protests when traditional democratic avenues remain closed.

When asked what advice she would offer to aspiring students aiming to work within international systems like the United Nations, Rahmatova emphasized a single attribute: audacity. "Everything starts from audacity," she stated, tracing her own milestones—from securing research opportunities to entering competitive global networks—back to a simple willingness to step forward, be brave, and ask difficult questions.

Yet, she remains deeply candid about the hidden tolls of a global trajectory, open-heartedly discussing the severe mental and emotional burdens of solitude, burnout, and intense homesickness that international students frequently face. Ultimately, Rahmatova believes that while international environments test personal resilience, maintaining intrinsic hope and a distinct regional purpose is what allows young leaders to consistently step forward and impact a rapidly changing world.

Follow Halima Rahmatova's journey from self-directed student in Uzbekistan to sustainability specialist in Geneva. In an interview with Alperen Çelik, she discusses navigating international student life, addressing Central Asia's water crises through unified policy, and why the next generation must bring bold audacity to global policymaking.

About the interviewed: Halima Rahmatova is an accomplished communications strategist and international relations expert specializing in public advocacy and media engagement. Following a distinguished career in strategic communications, she founded a leading consulting agency focused on social impact and institutional development. Currently, she serves as a Senior Advisor at an international policy think tank and contributes to

global strategic networks, where she focuses on public diplomacy, media trends, and regional analysis.