



## **Aspiring Geopark "Altai" as a Way of Sustainable Development of Altai Mountains**

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Mountainous Altai is the centre of biological and cultural diversity where indigenous people still maintain their traditional way of life.

Collapse of the Soviet Union led to withdrawal of many industrial companies and dramatic increase in unemployment. Nowadays Altai is working on a formidable task trying to develop economy while preserving and perpetuating traditions of indigenous people. Recently tourism is becoming economic priority.

The Altai Republic has a great potential for the development of the tourism industry, due to climatic conditions of the region, rich cultural and historical heritage and unique landscapes.

Currently a concept of formation of Geopark in this region of Russia is being developed. It is expected that this new direction for the Russian tourism is most suitable for the traditions of the indigenous peoples and will expand the number of tourists, attracting more intelligent people to visit our territory.

The indigenous people of the Altai worship nature and take care of many objects which have spiritual significance and carry out important cultural functions throughout centuries.