



Check against delivery

ADDRESS

by

**H.E. Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev
President of the Republic of Uzbekistan**

**at the General Debate of the 72nd Session
of the United Nations General Assembly**

New York, September 19, 2017

Dear Mr. Chairman!
Your Excellencies!
Ladies and Gentlemen!

Allow me to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to speak from the high rostrum of the United Nations.

A few weeks ago, our people broadly celebrated the 26th anniversary of Uzbekistan's state independence.

Today, Uzbekistan is rapidly developing. Carefully preserving the wisdom of past generations, we are consciously going towards resolute reforms and are committed to forming a new image of the country.

The political activity is growing with profound reforms are being implemented in all spheres. Their goal is to build a democratic state and a just society, where the priority is implementation of a simple and clear principle – «The human interests come first».

Following the results of the nationwide discussion, the five-year Development Strategy of Uzbekistan was adopted. While developing it, as if we have looked at ourselves from outside, so as not only to objectively assess our potential and opportunities, but also pay a close attention to our failures and mistakes.

The strategy is the program of real actions of renewal. It is already being put into practice.

We have declared the year 2017 as the Year of Dialogue with People and Human Interests in our country. Our goal is to strengthen the mechanisms that make the people's power in the country not nominal, but real.

We are deeply convinced: the people must not serve the government bodies, rather the government bodies must serve the people.

We have established the Virtual and People's Reception Offices of the President all over the country. Over a million of citizens have resolved their urgent problems with the help of these Reception Offices.

In cooperation with the International Labor Organization, we have taken effective measures to eradicate the child and forced labor.

Following the visit of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mr. Al Hussein, a program of measures to strengthen the guarantees of human rights protection was developed.

We have abolished such an outdated legacy of the past as exit visas, which were limiting the freedom of movement.

An open dialogue with national and international non-governmental organizations on protection of human rights is being intensified.

Proceeding from the principles of humanism, many individual cases of detention of persons in custody have been reviewed. The stumbled citizens who came under the influence of the ideology of extremism are undergoing a social rehabilitation with conditions being created for them to return to a normal life.

Now the activities of all law enforcement agencies in terms of protection of human rights and freedoms are under constant parliamentary and civil supervision.

The role of political parties and civil society is growing, and the true independence of the judiciary is being ensured. The role of mass media has significantly increased.

The most important vector of reforms is liberalization of the economic system and creation of favorable investment climate. We proceed from one simple truth: the richer the people are – the stronger shall be the state.

From the beginning of this month, Uzbekistan has completely switched to free conversion of the national currency. Along with this, all necessary measures are taken to mitigate any possible negative consequences for the population.

For the first time the Institute of the Ombudsman for the Protection of the Rights of Entrepreneurs was established. The taxes on business were significantly reduced. The access of business to credits was expanded. New free economic zones have been launched, where investors are granted extensive benefits.

The cooperation with international financial institutions is successfully developing and partnership with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development was renewed.

I want to note that the content of the Strategy is fully consistent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Dear participants of the session!

We are convinced that the United Nations must continue to play a central role in international relations.

Uzbekistan stands for its gradual reform. We believe that, in accordance with the realities of the modern world, the Security Council needs to be expanded. We support the steps taken by the new leadership of the United Nations to improve the system of its management.

I want to confirm – Uzbekistan will continue close partnership with the UN structures. We are determined to ensure the practical implementation of the «road map» developed following the recent visit of Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to Uzbekistan.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Today, Uzbekistan considers the region of Central Asia to be as the main priority of its foreign policy. And this is a conscious choice.

Being in the heart of Central Asia, Uzbekistan is keenly interested in the region to become a zone of stability, sustainable development and good-neighborliness.

A peaceful and economically prosperous Central Asia is our most important goal and key task.

Uzbekistan is determined to engage in dialogue, constructive interaction and strengthening the good-neighborliness.

We stand ready for reasonable compromises with the countries of Central Asia on all issues without exception.

Thanks to joint efforts in recent months, the level of political confidence has significantly increased in the region. Fundamentally important decisions on many issues were found.

Signing the Treaty on the State border between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in early September this year became a truly landmark event. A breakthrough in this very sensitive issue achieved for the first time in 26 years became possible thanks to political will demonstrated by parties and the readiness to find mutually acceptable solutions.

In a word, absolutely new political atmosphere was created in the region in a short period of time.

I believe that holding the regular consultation meetings of the heads of Central Asian states would facilitate the consolidation of this trend.

We intend to discuss the fundamental problems of the region at the High-Level International Conference “Central Asia: One Past and Common Future, Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Prosperity» to be held under the aegis of the United Nations in Samarkand in November.

Based on its results, we intend to make a proposal on the adoption of a special resolution of the General Assembly in support of the efforts of the states of Central Asia in terms of ensuring security and enhancing regional cooperation.

We count on the support of this proposal by the leadership of the United Nations and the international community.

Distinguished Mr. Chairman!

Speaking about the problems of ensuring security and stability in Central Asia, one cannot overlook such an important issue as the joint use of the region’s shared water resources.

We fully share the position of the UN Secretary-General that “the problems of water, peace and security are inextricably linked”.

I am convinced that there is no alternative to addressing the water problem other than equally taking into account the interests of the countries and nations of the region.

Uzbekistan supports the draft conventions on the use of water resources of the Amudarya and Syrdarya river basins developed by the United Nations Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy.

I would like to once again draw your attention to one of the most acute ecological problems of our time – the Aral Sea catastrophe.

I am holding the map of the Aral tragedy in my hands. I believe, comments are unnecessary here.

Overcoming the consequences of desiccation of the sea requires today the active consolidation of international efforts.

We stand for full implementation of the special UN Program to provide effective assistance to the population affected by the Aral Sea crisis adopted this year.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Stabilization of the situation in Afghanistan is an important condition to ensure not only regional but global security, as well.

We are convinced that the only way to peace in Afghanistan is a direct dialogue among the central government and main domestic political forces without preconditions.

The negotiations should be Afghan-led on the territory of Afghanistan and under the auspices of the United Nations. The wise Afghan people have the right to independently define their own destiny.

We support the appeal of the administration of the U.S. President Mr. Donald Trump to Afghanistan's neighbor-states to promote the peace process of the inter-Afghan settlement.

Uzbekistan has been making and will continue its contribution to the economic reconstruction of Afghanistan, development of its transport and energy infrastructure, training of national personnel.

I am convinced that Afghanistan must remain at the heart of the global agenda. The efforts of the international community should primarily be aimed at resolving acute social and economic problems of Afghanistan.

Our common determination to promote peace in this long-suffering country should not be weakened.

Dear participants of the session!

The aggravation of terrorist threats in the world, especially in recent years, indicates that the use of mainly forceful methods of counteraction does not justify itself.

Often the efforts are reduced to combating the consequences of challenges, rather than their root causes. I believe that along with other factors, ignorance and intolerance are at the heart of international terrorism and extremism.

In this regard, the most important task is to fight for the minds of people, especially young people.

Most of the crimes linked with extremist activity and violence are committed by the people under the age of 30.

Today's youth is the largest generation in the history of mankind totaling 2 billion people.

The planet's future and well-being depend on what kind of people our children will grow up into.

Our key task is to provide conditions for self-realization of the youth, create a barrier against the spread of the "virus" of the ideology of violence.

We believe that for this we need to develop the multilateral cooperation in the sphere of social support of the younger generation, protection of its rights and interests.

In this regard, Uzbekistan proposes to develop the UN International Convention on the Rights of Youth – a unified international legal instrument aimed at the formation and implementation of youth policy in the conditions of globalization and rapid development of information and communication technologies.

In our opinion, the signatory-states must make firm commitments to raise this sphere to the level of one of the main, vital priorities of their social policy.

We consider communicating the truly humanistic essence of Islam to a broad world community as the most important task.

We cherish our sacred religion as the focal point of time-honored values. We strongly condemn and we will never reconcile with those who rank our great faith together with violence and bloodshed.

Islam calls us to kindness and peace, preservation of a genuine human beginning.

I would like to especially note the invaluable contribution of a whole galaxy of outstanding representatives of the Central Asian Renaissance to the development of the Islamic and world civilization.

One of them - Imam Bukhari is acclaimed all over the world as the author of "Sahih Al-Bukhari", the second most important book in Islam after the Koran.

In order to preserve and study his richest legacy, disseminate his teachings on enlightened Islam, we decided to establish the Imam Bukhari International Research Center in Samarkand.

The activities of the Center for Islamic Civilization, which is being established in Tashkent, will contribute to implementation of this task.

I would like to address the participants of today's session with a proposal to adopt a special resolution of the General Assembly "Education and religious tolerance".

Its main goal is to promote universal access to education, eradicate illiteracy and ignorance.

It is designed to promote tolerance and mutual respect, ensure religious freedom, protect the rights of believers, and prevent their discrimination.

Ladies and gentlemen!

While maintaining the non-aligned status, Uzbekistan is open to dialogue. We are interested in expanding cooperation with all partners in the name of peace, progress and prosperity.

In this we see a decisive condition for the successful implementation of the most important tasks of reforms carried out in our country, the main goal of which is a human, his needs and interests.

Thank you for your attention!