

Main Messages

Voluntary National Review of the Republic of Uzbekistan on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals April 2020

In 2015, the Government of Uzbekistan committed to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In 2018, 16 national Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 125 corresponding targets were adopted. Simultaneously, an inter-agency Coordination Council for implementing the national SDG Roadmap was established. A web-portal was launched with data on about 100 indicators (at <http://nsdg.stat.uz>) and work is underway to establish data collection on the remaining 100 indicators.

The bicameral Parliamentary Commission on SDGs, civil society, youth and leading national NGOs are actively involved in SDGs promotion and implementation, including the preparation of this first VNR.

The implementation of the SDGs in Uzbekistan coincided with large-scale reforms in the framework of the national Action Strategy for 2017-2021. This strategy and its five priority areas have been confirmed as a pathway to achieving the SDGs. Work is underway to integrate the SDGs into national and regional development strategies and programs, including the Concept of Comprehensive Socio-economic Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030. The government is assessing the results of the reforms through monitoring 23 global ratings (indexes), including the global SDG Index, where Uzbekistan is currently ranked 52nd.

The country's long-term objective is to become a high middle-income country by 2030, therein doubling per capita income, as well as reducing poverty and inequality (SDG1 and SDG10). To achieve this, Uzbekistan is implementing structural reforms to strengthen the market economy, alongside currency and tax reforms, and systemic agricultural reforms (SDG2). A range of measures have been taken to improve the business climate, stimulate entrepreneurship and formal employment, including among youth and women (SDG5 and SDG8), as well as to attract investment and promote innovation (SDG9). Current challenges include ensuring sustainable employment for youth and women, as well as improving the effectiveness of the social protection system.

In healthcare (SDG3), measures are being taken to improve the quality and accessibility of services through improving the financing and insurance system, stimulating private investment, improving the training and professional development of medical personnel, as well as developing medical science and the widespread introduction of e-health. Current

priorities in the field of education (SDG4) include improving the quality and coverage of education at all levels, as well as encouraging increasing public and private investments.

The reforms in Uzbekistan are guided by one principle: “Human Interests Are Above All,” which is closely aligned with the fundamental principle of Agenda 2030, “Leaving No-one Behind.” Since the adoption of the SDGs, Uzbekistan has made significant progress in improving the protection of human rights and strengthening rule of law. The country has established a system of People’s Receptions of the President, administrative reform is ongoing, e-government is being improved, and reforms are being implemented to ensure the independence of the media and bloggers as well as to enhance the role of civil society.

The country has also prioritized strengthening the role and protecting the rights of women. Recently, laws have been adopted on gender equality and the protection of women from violence, the proportion of women in parliament has doubled (up to 32%), and women have been promoted to leadership positions at all levels of state and local authorities (SDGs 5 and 16).

Uzbekistan pursues a foreign policy of openness, cooperation, and peace. In recent years, the country has opened borders and is deepening cooperation with the Central Asian countries in the areas of rational use of trans-boundary resources and trade. Collaboration with UN agencies and international financial institutions (SDG17) is being strengthened. Following the liberalization of the visa regime, the annual tourist arrivals exceeded 6.7 million people in 2019 (compared to 2.5 million in 2017).

In environment area, Uzbekistan prioritizes mitigation and adaptation to climate change (including under the Paris Agreement) with a special focus on the Aral Sea region, conservation and the efficient use of water, land and energy resources, as well as biodiversity conservation (SDG 13, 14 and 15).

The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to slow down Uzbekistan’s progress on the SDGs. The Government is taking decisive measures to curb the spread of the pandemic and mitigate its socio-economic consequences. An Anti-Crisis Program has been adopted along with a US\$1bln Fund to support businesses and employment, and to expand social assistance to the vulnerable.