

Issues of development of free economic zones and small industrial zones are discussed

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev held a meeting devoted to the analysis of the effectiveness of activities on development of free economic and small industrial zones established in the country

The meeting was attended by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan, his deputies, state advisers to the President, heads of relevant ministries, departments and business entities.

The Strategy of actions on five priority areas of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021 outlines a number of tasks on strengthening macroeconomic stability, actively attracting investment in the economy and regions, especially foreign ones, creation of favorable conditions for development of private entrepreneurship on the basis of privatized state facilities, socio-economic development of districts and cities. Important in this direction is the ongoing activity on improving the efficiency of free economic zones, technoparks and small industrial zones, creation of new ones.

In accordance with the decree of the Head of our state on additional measures of activating and expanding free economic zones of October 26, 2016, even more favorable conditions have been created for this work.

Currently, there are 14 free economic zones in the country. 62 projects worth 486 million dollars are realized in "Navoi", "Angren", "Jizzakh", "Urgut", "Gijduvan", "Kokand" and "Khazarasp" FEZ, more than 4,6 thousand workplaces are created.

At the meeting, the unsatisfactory state of activities on establishment of new and improving the effectiveness of the existing FEZ, the need in

this regard for simplifying organizational procedures, increasing the attraction of investors and entrepreneurs was noted.

On behalf of the President of our country, a separate credit line in foreign currency was opened at the expense of the Fund for Reconstruction and Development of Uzbekistan in the amount of 100 million dollars for accelerating the implementation of investment projects in free economic zones, acquisition of imported high-tech equipment.

Active work is being also carried out on development of 7 new free economic zones specialized in pharmaceuticals: "Nukus-pharm", "Zomin-pharm", "Kosonsoy-pharm", "Sirdaryo-pharm", "Boysun-pharm", "Bustonlik-pharm" and "Parkent-pharm".

President of our country Shavkat Mirziyoyev during his visit to the districts of Tashkent, the Republic of Karakalpakstan and the regions examined the buildings and structures that had been empty for many years and gave instructions on effectively using these facilities, organizing new enterprises, establishment of small industrial zones on their basis. As a result, the number of small industrial zones in our country reached 96.

By now, 1021 projects worth 535 billion sums have been implemented in these territories. As a result of involvement of new enterprises, more than 9,6 thousand workplaces were created. Within the framework of projects, products of light, chemical, food industry, electrical engineering,

modern construction materials, furniture and other products are in demand not only in the domestic market, but also in the foreign market.

In addition, it is planned to create 11 thousand new workplaces as a result of implementation of 248 projects.

During the meeting, special attention was paid to the role of small industrial zones that are being established in attracting investments, organizing new workplaces and, on this basis, improving the well-being of the population.

President of our country Shavkat Mirziyoyev criticized activities of the heads of relevant ministries, departments and business entities, noted the lack of initiative and organization of activities on development of free economic zones and small industrial zones.

In particular, it remains a complex and often formal procedure for reviewing and approving projects by authorized ministries and departments. The facts of bureaucratism are still being observed when solving the issues of allocating land for participants of free economic zones.

Activities on attraction of foreign investments in creating new industries in the newly created "Urgut", "Kokand", "Gijduvan" and "Khazarasp" FEZ, as well as in all pharmaceutical free economic zones does not meet due requirements. There are problems in stable and timely maintenance of free economic and small industrial zones with electricity, natural gas, water, in general

engineering communication networks.

The Head of our state instructed to develop a set of measures on eliminating shortcomings in free economic and small industrial zones, creating more opportunities for investors and entrepreneurs.

The need was emphasized, first of all, for revising the normative-legal framework for the development of activities of these zones, bringing it in line with modern requirements, creating an open and understandable mechanism for all.

Special attention was also paid to the issue of simplifying the procedure for allocating land plots and vacant buildings. In particular, projects to be implemented in free economic zones will be considered by the Administrative Council under the Cabinet of Ministers. So far, this council has included 17 ministries and departments. According to the instruction of the President of our country, their number has been reduced to 4.

The criteria for selection of investment projects for placement in economic zones will be reviewed, additional measures will be taken on improvement of lending conditions for participants of free economic zones and providing engineering communications.

In this regard, at the meeting, instructions were given on adoption of effective measures aimed at timely provision of enterprises located in free economic and small industrial zones with all necessary engineering and communication networks and infrastructure.

Towards strengthening friendship, good-neighborliness and confidence

On October 5-6, 2017, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic Almazbek Atambayev paid a state visit to our country at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev

The main events within the framework of the state visit were held on October 5, at Kuksaroy residence.

After the ceremony of the official meeting, the heads of the two countries held negotiations in a narrow and in an expanded format. During the conversation, the prospects of further development of mutually beneficial cooperation were discussed, views were exchanged on regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Cooperation between our countries is consistently developing on the basis of the Treaty on eternal friendship between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Republic, signed on December 24, 1996.

A new page has been opened in the development of cooperation between our countries over the past year. Particularly significant was the state visit of the President of our country Shavkat Mirziyoyev on September 5-6 this year to the Kyrgyz Republic, which

became a historic event in development of relations between the two countries. Documents related to the spheres of trade and economy, transport, energy, culture and issues of state borders that were signed within its framework, raised mutual ties to a new level.

The visit of the President of Kyrgyzstan Almazbek Atambayev to our country became a logical continuation of this historic event.

Due to the political will and efforts of the heads of the two states, cooperation between our countries and friendship between our people have strengthened. Visits of delegations are being conducted at the level of governments and regions, and this gives positive results.

Our countries support each other in the international arena. They also interact constructively within the framework of such international structures as the UN, the SCO, the CIS, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and others. Positions of the sides on issues of regional and international importance are same or close.

Our countries are interested in strengthening peace and security in the region. Attention at the meeting was paid to the need of further strengthening cooperation in the fight against international terrorism, religious extremism, illicit trafficking in narcotics, transnational organized crime and other challenges posing a threat to international security.

The importance of strengthening bilateral and regional cooperation on rational and integrated use of water and energy resources in Central Asia, taking into account the interests of all the states of the region, was emphasized. To this end, representatives of the two countries will conduct regular consultations for development of mutually acceptable long-term sustainable mechanisms for addressing the issues of joint and integrated use of water resources.

Issues of further development of political, trade-economic and interregional cooperation between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan,

strengthening cooperation in the spheres of energy, industry, agriculture and water resources, transport and communication, culture and others were discussed at the meeting. An important role of the Intergovernmental commission on bilateral cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Republic was noted.

Manufacturers of Uzbekistan have recently taken part in the international exhibition held in Osh. Within the framework of the state visit of the President of Kyrgyzstan to Uzbekistan, an exhibition of industrial products and a business forum were held at Uzexpocentre.

Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Almazbek Atambayev got acquainted with the exhibition of industrial products of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Prospective agreements were reached at the business forum organized within the framework of the visit.

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High competitiveness is the key to success of the enterprises

Enterprises are the main production links of economy. Production necessary to society and the state is created, services are rendered, the economy regime is observed, modern technologies, tools and objects of the labor are applied, the advanced management is used at the enterprises. The more effectively the enterprises work, the higher rates of economic development of the country and welfare of the people are respectively. The efficiency as practice shows, can be achieved in the different ways, including high competitiveness of production

Maintenance of high competitiveness means that all resources of the enterprise are used so productive as it is more profitable than its main competitors. It at the same time assumes that the enterprise holds strong position on market for goods and services and his production is in stable demand. However this state doesn't remain unchangeable in real life. It is in the constant movement and development.

The latter depends on changes in conditions of goods production and sale evidenced by emergence of new, more progressive technologies, appearance of new competitors, change of tastes and desires of consumers, growth or decline in demand for the goods manufactured by the enterprise, change of economic and political conditions of development of production and realization of goods and in many other things.

All these changes occur, as a rule, under influence of both the objective and subjective reasons of development of national economy and regions, and not at the same time, but at different times and in the most various combinations. Therefore the management of the enterprise has to be capable to monitor the changes occurring in the conditions of managing and make the corresponding transformations in policy of production management and goods sale. Change of commodity policy, introduction of new technologies, production diversification, modernization of forms of sale of finished products, flexible pricing, entry into the new markets, etc. can be such transformations, for example.

The major moment in reforming, bringing changes to increase competitiveness of the enterprise is the choice of their implementation. A number of domestic and foreign works offer to proceed from a so-called cycle of competitive advantage of the company - CAC which components in temporary measurement are origin, acceleration, delay, maturity, recession.

All factors which affect or can affect competitiveness can be divided into two big groups: external and internal those. External factors are factors the enterprise can't affect and has to perceive them as something invariable in the policy. These factors, first of all, include the economic, political and other situation and also activity of the government power structures developing in the country (fiscal and credit policy, legislation), the developing economic environment, demand parameters, etc.

Heads of the enterprises have to capture in due time and correctly these factors and arrange the economic activity, carry out production and commodity policy accordingly. As the person can't live and do, basically, without society, and the enterprises can't successfully function without taking into consideration the situation developing in the country. In other words, each enterprise has to know not only the "habitat", but also the external environment, including the state economic policy pursued at present, the competitors, market conditions, etc.

As for internal factors, they include activity of the management and management personnel of the enterprise. It is above all about the professional and qualification level of administrative personnel. Experts of such level, as practice shows, are capable to make a revolution at production, achieve growth of its efficiency, provide increase in susceptibility of the enterprise to the market. Internal factors also are availability of resources of the enterprise including especially material and raw resources, volume of production and sales cost, the system of technological equipment of production, etc.

Based on knowledge of external and internal factors it is important to determine advantages and disadvantages of enterprise, first of all, in such spheres as a manpower, material resources, technology, management, situation in the market, finance, etc.

When carrying out this work special attention has to be paid, first, to identification of those spheres of activity in which the enterprise surpasses the competitors or differs from them, and secondly, to establishment of the spheres of activity for improvement. Besides, it is expedient to define strength of activity of the enterprise, which developing can bring not only high profit, but also advantage in the competition.

The following stage in activity of the enterprise aimed at high competitiveness and economic success is determining of the role and position in today's market. It is important to proceed from maximizing those opportunities of the enterprise which set it apart from competitors. It can be achieved, for example, by flexible use of internal opportunities on the basis of technical policy aimed, first, at constant introduction of "know-how" in production, secondly, at providing quality of the production and, thirdly, at timely delivery of production to the consumer.

For example, the Procter and Gamble company has determined as the motto quality of the production and continuous expansion of its range on the basis of basic models. The companies "IBM", "McDonalds", "Frito-line" have build the reputation on rendering services, and Hewlett-Packard and "Johnson & Johnson" are known as innovative firms. 48-hour service of the clients in any part of the world became the motto of the known company "Caterpillar".

Seeking for flexible use of the opportunities, the enterprise has to ensure technological and economic efficiency no lower than branch efficiency. In other words, it has to find a way of an optimum combination of desirable technological and economic efficiency to provide the best technological and economic conditions of the offer. As practice suggests it can be achieved, first of all, by use of resource-saving and high-

performance technologies which allow to lower considerably production costs, and, therefore, to increase the profit (income). Addition to it can be effective organization of sale of the production promoted by advertizing, search of new sales channels, flexible pricing, etc.

To conclude, the enterprise will never be able to become competitive if it is able to produce, but isn't able or can't sell the manufactured products or services. As example of succeeding, including high competitiveness, activity of the American company "John Deere" which enters the four of the largest producers of agricultural machinery in the country and in the first hundred leading companies of the USA can be shown. Nearly 50 thousand workers and employees work at its enterprises; it has 20 plants and extensive marketing network in the form of the distribution centers located in 17 zones of the country. Proceeding from assessment of a state and the prospects of the market, each three months the company develops the short-term plan of production for the next 12 months, i.e. the company constantly works in accordance with the "sliding" program which is developed taking into account identifying customer needs.

The principle according to which one must think first and foremost about opportunities of product sales, and then about opportunities of its production is the cornerstone of formation of the strategy of the company development. At the same time specialists of the company, first of all, employees of marketing service, carry out systematic observation of market development tendencies what, among other things, allows carrying out effective commodity policy. Focusing production on commodities necessary to the market, the marketing service assist to avoiding emergence of gaps in satisfaction of demand and preventing the losses associated with production not saleable in the market.

Achievement of high

competitiveness it is not a fad or a craze, but rather imperative and the requirement of the modern market. Not only the above mentioned American company but also enterprises of many other countries including our republic follow this path today. For example, production with the "Made in Uzbekistan" brand is nowadays known in many corners of the world. That is fine, but, we believe, focuses or can focus on bigger tasks. As the First President of Uzbekistan, the organizer of all market transformations in the country Islam Karimov has repeatedly said, "all our achievements are in our pocket, nobody claims on them and nobody takes them away. We shouldn't be satisfied with what has already been achieved, but more courageous to move forward to new boundaries".

Such situation develops in the country today. Evidence of this is the Strategy on five priority directions of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021 approved by the Decree of the President Shavkat Mirziyoyev "The concept of administrative reform in the Republic of Uzbekistan", which has been developed and is already being implemented, new opportunities for development of small business and entrepreneurship.

They may also include the favorable investment climate created in the country and the business environment, formation of new free economic zones, strengthening of the status and independence of regions and many other things. In these conditions the enterprises, it appears, shouldn't work at a half-capacity, not to achieve good results in production economic activity, including low competitiveness. The enterprises, trying to obtain high competitiveness, not only improve the economic and financial position, but also bring a worthy contribution in creative transformations of the country.

Erkin MAKHMUDOV
Nigora KHOJAEVA

Towards strengthening friendship, good-neighborliness and confidence

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The sides reached an agreement on increasing the volume of trade and expansion of its nomenclature several times, while maintaining stable growth rates of mutual trade. To this end, activities will continue on establishing industrial cooperation, organizing joint ventures on production of agricultural and household appliances, automobiles, buses, construction materials, textile products and other goods. Mutual visits of businessmen of the two countries will be organized, joint business forums will be held. Participation of representatives of the two countries in international

exhibitions and fairs, which will be held in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, is supported.

During the discussions, special attention was paid to issues of expansion of relations in the sphere of transport communications. It was noted that this will increase the economic and transit opportunities of the two countries, and the opening of new transport corridors that is of mutual interest for the sides, will bring additional revenue. Construction of the railway line Uzbekistan - Kyrgyzstan - China and the establishment of traffic on the route Andijan - Osh - Irkeshtam - Kashgar are of great importance in this.

There are also great opportunities in development of cooperation in cultural and humanitarian sphere. For this purpose, relations in the field of education, science and technology, direct contacts between educational and scientific institutions are developing. This creates conditions for the preparation of scientific and pedagogical personnel, exchange of researchers, specialists and students, as well as information on issues of qualifications and scientific degrees.

The achieved historical agreements on the state borders, simplification of cross-border interregional arrivals and departures

on the initiative of the President of our country have further strengthened cultural and humanitarian ties. This will open wide opportunities for the development of tourism.

There are schools in Uzbekistan, where education is conducted in the Kyrgyz language, and in Kyrgyzstan - in Uzbek. A modern school is being built in Osh with the assistance of Uzbekistan.

As a result of negotiations at the highest level, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and President Almazbek Atambayev signed the Declaration on strategic partnership, strengthening friendship, good-neighborliness and confidence between the Republic of

Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Republic.

More than 10 documents on cooperation between the regions, ministries and departments of the two countries have been signed in the presence of the heads of the states. A number of documents representing mutually beneficial interest were also prepared and adopted on the second day of the state visit.

Thereupon, the state visit of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic Almazbek Atambayev to our country ended. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev has seen off the distinguished guest at "Tashkent" international airport named after Islam Karimov.

The tourist brand of Uzbekistan recognized around the world

The course towards the accelerated development of tourism carried out recently in Uzbekistan, attraction of investments into branch is aimed at the maximum fulfillment of the available considerable potential and increase in tourist image of the country. The new impulse is formed, first of all, on the strong base created for years of independence in this sphere

Indeed, every year interest in Uzbekistan as to region with an astonishing story, bright architecture, unique culture grows in the tourist world. It's not a coincidence. In the territory of the republic over seven thousand monuments of various epochs and civilizations, the majority of which are located in such ancient cities of the country, as Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Tashkent, Shakhrisabz. They are included in the List of the world heritage of UNESCO.

It is also confirmed by a steady tendency of growth of number of the foreign tourists visiting our country. For example, following the results of 2014 the figure has made 1,94 million people that is 40% more than in 2011. And in 2016 this figure made over 2 million. At the same time export of tourist services in 2011-2015 has increased more than 3 times.

Rich flora and fauna, amazing landscape, contrast of natural zones, variety of the cultural traditions and the ethnic cuisine united in one place can be found just in a few corners of the planet. Rare natural objects of Uzbekistan have allowed the republic to take the rightful leading positions on ecological tourism among the countries of Central Asia

The world renowned natural reserves among which is the Chatkal national biosphere reserve included by UNESCO in the list of the world's largest nature protection territories deserves the special attention. Within the concept of ecotourism development of Uzbekistan much work is being done to restore the nature and ensure stability of an ecological situation of Aydar-Arnasay lake system, Ugam-Chatkal recreational and Charvak resort zones.

Ecological tourism is not only the effective instrument of preservation of natural and cultural heritage, restoration of ecosystems, but also an important element of sustainable development of the visited regions

and increase in welfare of local population.

Vitamin tours and geotourism can be attributed to new and rather young, but perspective directions of ecotourism in our country.

It should be noted that the State Committee for Tourism Development together with the Ministry of Health has developed a plan of health tourism development. Services of medical institutions can become components of the tourist's products granted in Uzbekistan, first of all to citizens from neighboring countries.

This type of tourism allows combining rest with treatment not only on the basis of health resorts of the republic, but also the medical centers.

The infrastructure meeting the international standards created in the country allows providing comfortable rest as an important component of any travel. In 26 years of sovereign development the extensive network of hotel is created in Uzbekistan: more than 600 hotels and similar accommodation facilities with various form of ownership, with a capacity more than 50 thousand places function.

Among the most known are Lotte Hotels, Radisson Blu, Ramada, Wyndham, Hyatt Regency.

In the market of the republic more than 830 travel agencies which activity is generally aimed at attraction and service of foreign tourists function. More than 500 enterprises are engaged in production of souvenir. It should be noted that practically all tourist organizations are the private sector organizations. It positively influences formation of the competitive environment, increasing thereby quality of the provided services.

The tourist logistics created in days of independence: development of transport



infrastructure and availability of objects to tourist visits can also be considered as one of key factors of tourism development.

11 international airports of Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Urgench, Nukus and other cities are the air gates of Uzbekistan. These harbors equipped with the latest equipment and built in accordance with recent trends in the sphere are capable to serve passengers at the highest qualitative level and all types of the planes operated in the world. The national airline "Uzbekiston Khavo Yullari" performs regular flights to more than 50 cities of Europe, Asia, the Middle East and North America.

In 2011 Afrosiyob modern high-speed electric trains begun running between Tashkent and Samarkand. Extension of this line to Bukhara and Qarshi has created additional comfort to tourists. The next stage provides establishing such railway communication to Khiva.

Commissioning of the Angren-Pap railway line lying on Kamchik Pass at the height of 2200 meters above sea level has allowed connecting areas of the Fergana Valley with other regions of Uzbekistan. Besides, this section of the road became the most important

link of a new international transit corridor China - Central Asia - Europe that would open new opportunities also for tourism.

In recent years in Uzbekistan about 3 thousand kilometers of modern highways and a significant amount of objects of roadside infrastructure, including campings, gas stations, feeding and household service facilities are constructed and reconstructed.

In 2015 the Tashkent City Tour project within which tours across Tashkent aboard 4 comfortable double-decker buses are provided was launched. Considering steady demand, shortly the number of excursion routes will increase. Procurement of 6 more such buses which will run in the capital and Samarkand is planned for this purpose.

Issues of training and retraining highly qualified personnel remain a decisive factor of development of the tourist sphere. The world statistics says that today one person from eleven works in the sphere of tourism. It confirms strategic importance of branch and its global prospects. There are 5 higher educational institutions, including the Singapore Institute of Management Development in

Tashkent and 11 professional colleges in Uzbekistan to train and retrain modern experts. To promote national tourist brand in the world market Uzbekistan annually participates in large profile international exhibitions. If in 2000 the country has been presented only on two such events of Western Europe - in Berlin and London, since 2012 by efforts of Goscomtourizm, Uzbekiston Khavo Yullary State JS company and Uzbekiston Temir Yullary JSC the uniform national stand is annually deployed at the largest fairs among which are EMITT (Istanbul), FITUR (Madrid), ITB (Berlin), MITT (Moscow), BALTUR (Riga), TOP RESA (Paris), INCONTRI (Rimini, Italy), WTM (London), JATA (Tokyo).

Experts of the World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTTC) also speak about the branch gaining the increasing momentum. They have included Uzbekistan in number of five states in which the real tourist boom shortly is expected. According to forecasts of this organization, growth of tourism in the republic in the next ten years will be about 7% a year.

According to specialists of the World Bank, having achieved a main goal - increase in tourist potential and increase in inflow of travelers, our country will receive direct benefits due to creation of new jobs, growth of export and GDP. And it in turn will allow the state to support the high level of economic development and welfare of citizens.

Certainly, the priority attention Uzbekistan pays today to expansion of all segments of tourist industry, increase in capacity of the country in this direction and rational use of the available material and non-material resources in 26 years of sovereign development have allowed to create the national tourist brand recognized around the world.

Uzbekistan – Kyrgyzstan business forum

Uzbekistan - Kyrgyzstan business forum was held within the framework of the state visit of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic Almazbek Atambayev to our country, in Tashkent

It was attended by representatives of ministries and companies of the two countries responsible for the spheres of trade, economy, tourism industry, electric power industry, construction, engineering, metallurgy, automotive industry, electrical, transport logistics, agriculture, food, textile and light industry.

Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan A.Ikramov, President of the Chamber of Commerce and

Industry of Kyrgyzstan M.Sharshekeyev and others noted that people of the two countries with a commonality of religion, language and culture are strengthening the mutual relations of good-neighborliness, trade and economic cooperation in a new, high spirit. It was emphasized that the ratification of the Agreement between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Republic on Uzbek - Kyrgyz State border plays a special role in maintaining the national interests of

our countries and is an important step towards further long-term cooperation.

Over the past period of this year, the trade turnover between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan increased by 60 percent and amounted to 170 million dollars. There are 54 enterprises with participation of Kyrgyz capital in Uzbekistan. In turn, there are 49 enterprises established by entrepreneurs of Uzbekistan in Kyrgyzstan.

More than 500 heads of state and

public organizations of the two countries, representatives of companies took part in the forum. Agreements have been reached on development of relations in the spheres of trade, investment, energy, tourism, establishment of new joint ventures, cooperation in the spheres of engineering, construction, and production of agricultural machinery. In particular, 17 documents on cooperation in the field of automotive industry, maintenance, construction, production of agricultural and

household appliances were signed at the business forum.

Contracts totaling more than 200 million dollars were signed at the forum. Issues of bringing the volume of trade to 500 million dollars in the future, establishment of joint ventures were discussed.

Within the framework of the event, B2B meetings were held with participation of entrepreneurs, where agreements had been reached in the spheres of tourism, food, information technologies, and light industry.

Reforms in the sphere of education are giving their high results

President of our country Shavkat Mirziyoyev held a meeting on issues of reforming the sphere of education, further development of the professional education system and improving testing examinations for admission to universities in the baccalaureate.

The meeting was attended by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan, heads of relevant ministries and departments.

The issue of development of the education and upbringing system has been raised to the level of the state policy in our country, from the first years of independence, a huge work is being implemented on educating the younger generation to modern knowledge and professions in accordance with world standards, the formation of physically healthy and spiritually mature personalities, promoting the realization of their talents and potential, educating youth in the spirit of love and devotion to the Motherland.

In the Decree of the President of our country "On the Strategy of actions for further development of the Republic of Uzbekistan" of February 7, 2017, a number of tasks have been defined for the development of the social sphere, in particular, the sphere of education and science.

The document provides for strengthening the material and technical base of educational institutions, building new ones, carrying out reconstruction and capital repairs of existing buildings, equipping them with modern educational and laboratory equipment, computers, educational and methodical aids.

A program for the radical improvement of the system of higher education in 2017-2021 will be developed, work will be carried out on further improvement of the curricula, gradually increasing independence of higher education institutions by expanding their powers in using additional sources of funding and providing paid services.

Over the past year, about seventy relevant resolutions, decrees and orders of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Cabinet of Ministers were adopted, which marked the beginning of a new stage in the radical reform of the education system.

For the first time this year, students are admitted to the 10th grade of the secondary special education system. This was carried out in parallel with the process of admission to academic lyceums and professional colleges. At the same time, the wishes and opinions of parents and students were mainly taken into account.

The President of our country particularly noted the need to take into account the views of parents and students in further improving activities carried out in the sphere, organizing such events as Doors Open Days, holding meetings.

In 2016/2017 academic year, over 466 thousand students graduated from general education schools, of which more than 170 thousand were enrolled in professional colleges. 288 thousand schoolchildren, that is, more than 60 percent, are continuing their education in 10th grades.

At the meeting, during the discussion of reforms held in the sphere, special attention was also paid to issues of mastering by youth of professions, educating students in the spirit of patriotism.

At the same time, great importance is attached to the study of the rich heritage of our great ancestors by the youth, educating the younger generation as their worthy successors, mature personalities.

The organization of a specialized school on in-depth study of disciplines in the area of information and communication technologies named after Muhammad al-Khorazmiy became also the first step towards implementing this task.

Establishment of this school will create the basis for preparation of highly qualified personnel from the school age, formation of specialists in the sphere corresponding to modern requirements and standards.

The resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On establishment of the state specialized general educational boarding school named after Mirzo Ulugbek and the park of Astronomy and aeronautics" was also adopted.

In accordance with this resolution, the specialized state general educational boarding school named after Mirzo Ulugbek will be organized at the Institute of astronomy for in-depth study of mathematics, astronomy, physics and informatics.

One of the tasks set before the school is formation of a base of highly qualified teachers. It is especially noted that the creation of such specialized schools will serve to educate youth in the spirit of patriotism and love for the Motherland.

At the meeting, the issue of professional guidance for students of the 8th and 9th grades, taking into account the opportunities and potential of the regions, was also considered. This will open up new opportunities for students in mastering professions in the next stage of education. From now on, graduates of general educational schools will be trained in about fifty professions. The organization of modern equipped training and production centers is planned on the basis of professional colleges and general educational schools. In addition, a number of professional colleges are attached to relevant ministries and departments, enterprises and organizations.

Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on measures of further improving the activities of secondary special, professional education institutions of March 14, 2017, serves as a guide to action.

This will help to increase the role of these institutions in training personnel and creating guaranteed workplaces.

In this connection, the President of our country instructed the heads of the sphere to visit places, to study the real needs of each region in specific specialists.

At the meeting, measures aimed at improving the educational process in higher educational institutions, training youth on the basis of modern requirements were discussed, which is one of the relevant issues on the agenda. At the same time, it is important to ensure the openness and transparency of testing examinations when entering universities.

The Head of our state also gave instructions on development of proposals for improving testing examinations for admission to higher education institutions in the baccalaureate, introducing relevant advanced experience of developed foreign countries, ensuring transparency of testing examinations.

At the meeting it was noted that the interest of youth in obtaining higher education is growing, but the existing system of testing examinations is outdated and does not meet modern requirements.

The Head of our state gave corresponding instructions to officials on issues of improving the education system, providing with qualitative educational literature, educating youth in the spirit of patriotism.

Interethnic harmony – factor of prosperity

On October 6, the delegation led by the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief of the UN Human Rights Council A.Shaheed visited Fergana region.

The delegation met with the khokim of Fergana region Sh.Ganiyev. Information on the ongoing work in the field of strengthening interethnic harmony and religious tolerance was provided at the meeting.

Currently, there are 7 national cultural centers in Fergana region. Representatives of all nationalities are given equal opportunities for preserving and developing their language, traditions, customs, values. Navruz, Sabantuy, Maslenitsa, Tano and other national holidays are widely celebrated with participation of representatives of different nationalities. Events, organized in makhallas, cultural and educational institutions, serve as an important factor in strengthening interethnic harmony and cohesion.

A friendship festival that is traditionally held under "Uzbekistan - our common home" motto, is also of great importance in development of culture and traditions, upbringing feelings of respect for national and universal values in the minds and hearts of youth.

The guests were greatly impressed by conditions created in the national cultural center of Fergana.

The delegation led by Ahmed Shaheed met with representatives of the regional national cultural centers and religious confessions. At the meeting, the achievements of the national cultural centers, the importance of activities on strengthening friendship and mutual respect, effective activity of religious confessions were emphasized.

Uzbekistan – Russia business forum

Within the framework of the visit of the delegation of the Russian Federation led by the Minister of Industry and Trade Denis Manturov to our country, a business forum was held in Tashkent with participation of Uzbekistan and Russia businessmen.

At the event, which was attended by the heads of ministries, companies of the two countries in the sphere of trade and industry, investments and other business sectors, issues of further development of perspective relations between Uzbekistan and Russia in the trade, economic and investment spheres were discussed.

Our countries as reliable strategic partners are paying special attention to further development of mutually beneficial cooperation. These aspects were reflected in the course of effective negotiations within the framework of the state visit of the President of our country Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the Russian Federation on April 4-5, 2017.

Trade and economic relations between Uzbekistan and Russia are strengthening in accordance with the Economic Cooperation Program for 2013-2017, the Intergovernmental agreement on the main areas of development and deepening of economic cooperation in 2015-2019.

There are about 1000 enterprises in our country created jointly with Russian entrepreneurs. Representative offices of more than 60 companies of Russia are operating in Uzbekistan. There are 569 business entities established jointly with partners from Uzbekistan, in Russia. In 2016, the trade turnover between the two countries amounted to about 4 billion 200 million dollars, exceeded 3 billion dollars in January-August this year.

During the business forum, businessmen discussed the projects that interest them. Perspective agreements on further development of cooperation in petrochemical industry, transport communications, agriculture, medicine, and industrial production have been reached.

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F.A. Kadirov, A.A. Paygamon, B.D. Alikhanov,
A.A. Abdusalomov, R.K. Nazarov

Deputy editor-in-chief: Zare SARDARYAN

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Address of the editorial office:

107A Amir Temur str., 100084 Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Telephone: 238-59-77, 234-09-62

E-mail: dp.uz@inbox.uz

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