REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN
COUNTRY REPORT
AID AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

AID CONSORTUIM
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Representatives: Ashley Rosen, Delaney Swink, Keira Meyer, and Kimberly Schuster
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COUNTRY BACKGROUND

GEOGRAPHY

The Republic of Uzbekistan is located in Central Asia. It is one of only two doubly landlocked countries in the world.\(^1\) The terrain of the country includes deserts, mountains, and fertile land near the rivers, the Syr Darya and Amu Darya.\(^2\) Uzbekistan has many natural resources, including oil, gas, gold, and uranium.\(^3\)


HISTORY

Humans have lived in the area of Uzbekistan for around 60,000 years.\(^4\) Uzbekistan had great city-states in the area and they were conquered by Alexander the Great in 4\(^{th}\) century BCE.\(^5\) Turkic nomads lived in the area in 6\(^{th}\) century AD. In 8\(^{th}\) century AD, Arabs took the region and introduced Islam.\(^6\) The Mongols (13\(^{th}\) cent.), Dzungars (15\(^{th}\)-17\(^{th}\) cent.) and Persians (18\(^{th}\) cent.) also conquered the region.\(^7\) It was located along major trade routes and was at a crossroads between the East and West.\(^8\) Russia conquered the region in 1865.\(^9\) The Republic of Uzbekistan became an independent nation in 1991, after being unbound from the Soviet Union’s control.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Population: about 30 million
- Ethnic groups: 80% Uzbek, 5.5% Russian, 5% Tajik, 3% Kazakh, 2.5% Karakalpak, 1.5% Tatar
- Official language: Uzbek (Russian spoken by 14% of population, but is not official)
- Religions: 88% Muslim (mostly Sunni), Eastern Orthodox 9%\(^{10}\)

GOVERNMENT

- Gained independence from Soviet Union on September 1st 1991 (now Independence Day)
- Capital: Tashkent (population: 2.25 million)
- Government type: presidential republic, unitary
- 12 provinces and 1 autonomous republic (Karakalpakastan Republic)
- Current president: President Shavkat Mirziyoyev (since Sept 2016)
- Previous president (1991-2016): President Islam Karimov (died Sept 2016)\(^{11}\)

ECONOMY

- GDP: US$202.3 billion
- Agriculture 19%, industry 33%, services 46%
- Agriculture products: cotton, vegetables, fruits, grain, livestock
- Industries: textiles, food processing, mining, chemicals
- 4.9% unemployment rate
- Export partners: Switzerland, China, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Russia, Bangladesh
- Import partners: China, Russia, South Korea, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Germany**

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**PROGRESS IN THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Uzbekistan made great progress in regards to the Millennium Development goals from 2000-2015. For the first Millennium Development Goal, the government worked to reduce poverty and improve living standards of all citizens during these years. In order to attain these results, the government of Uzbekistan implemented structural reforms that contributed to accelerated economic growth, which provided the foundations for sustainable welfare improvement. Policies put in place have been able to boost the volume of investments in the country by 6.4 times, reduce the agriculture sector while increasing the industrial sector, and create a bigger need for employment. These improvements have resulted in the ability to make increased investments in projects regarding the social infrastructure of the country. In addition to this, the government put incentives in place for small businesses and entrepreneurs, which increased the number of those employed in this sector from 51.8% to 76.7%. This was a big achievement because the country has historically relied on the agriculture sector for much of its’ industry, and increasing other sectors is able to help decrease the dependence on one area. Another way the government of Uzbekistan has worked to reduce poverty is by providing increased social protection to those who are vulnerable, and increasing public spending on the social sphere. This spending increased from 47.6% to 58.6% between 2001 and 2013, and was able to help with reforms in education by expanding this budget from 25.5% to 35% of total public expenditures. The developments in business and social sectors were used in targeted regional development, which made sure that citizens living in rural areas and regions lagging behind the country average were receiving the same benefits and assistance as others. This resulted in increased GDP growth rates not only for the country as a whole, but also for individual regions all throughout the nation. Because of the implemented projects discussed above, the poverty rate in Uzbekistan was reduced from 27.5% in 2001 to 14.1% in 2013, as shown on the chart below.

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**Diagram 1.1. Dynamics of Poverty Reduction, 2001-2015, %**

*Source: State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan*

Poverty rate will further decrease to 13.7% by 2015
In regard to the second Millennium Development goal, Uzbekistan already had universal educational access, and the main goal was to improve the quality of this already existing education, and make sure enrollment rates were high among all groups of people. As a result of this goal, the provision of material and technical bases for schools was focused on which included things such as infrastructure and textbooks. Uzbekistan was able to increase the number of educational institutions in secondary specialized professional education from 348 to 1556 between 2001-2013, with an increase of professional colleges from 301 to 1413. The provision of textbooks in secondary schools also increased from 77% to 99.3% in 2013, so 99.3% of all students were provided with textbooks. Another step to increasing education was improving the quality of the teaching process, which saw a decrease of number of students per teacher from 14 to 11, as well as increased availability of equipment in general education schools. Teachers also now must be certified more and have higher levels of qualifications, which has been able to affect the quality of education the students receive.

For MDG number 3, promoting gender equality and empowering women, Uzbekistan used a targeted approach to achieve results. Target one was eliminating gender inequality in education, target two was eliminating gender inequality in employment, and target three was ensuring equal opportunities for women and men in political decision making. To achieve this, the government implemented legal and institutional frameworks to promote gender equality, including creating a national Plan of Action to improve the status of women of Uzbekistan. Ensuring a compulsory 12-year education helps maintain equality between genders in school, as well as giving girls the opportunity to be
successful in profession of their choosing and also reduces the rate of early marriages. To further increase women’s access to opportunities, social assistance policies were implemented as well such as benefits for non-working mothers, and incentives for schoolgirls to encourage attendance in low-income families. In the entrepreneurship sector, women have been given special attention to boost their participation within the labor market, and there has been an increase of 30% in loans given to them between 2011-2013.

Reduction of infant and child mortality rates was another goal set out by the MDGs, that Uzbekistan made great progress in. In the nation, the mortality rate of children under five has decreased by half, falling from 56.9 in 2002, to 39.6 in 2012 per 1,000 childbirths. Infant mortality rate has also dropped from 16.7 per 1000 live births, to 9.8 between the years of 2002-2013. In addition to this, the differences in these rates between regions are now becoming more narrow, and regional disparities in child mortality rates between 2000-2013 decreased by 57.3%. Uzbekistan has been able to achieve this progress by improving access to healthcare with the addition of reforms, as well as implementing targeted children’s health programs while partnered with WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, EU, and various NGOs. Advanced medical equipment, more medical centers, and better care for mothers and their children were made possible through these actions. Programs were also installed to achieve better nutrition among mothers and children, and the rates of anemia in children reduced from 66.6% to 32.9%. As a whole, children are healthier and more nourished than before, and rates of child mortality have drastically fallen, proving success with this MDG.

To address not only child mortality rate, but also maternal mortality rate, Uzbekistan adopted MDG 5 as well, and aimed to reduce maternal mortality by one third by 2015. Uzbekistan was able to surpass this goal and effectively lowered this rate from 34.1 deaths per 100,000 live births, to 20 deaths per 100,000 live births from 2001-2013. In addition, access to reproductive health services is now universal in Uzbekistan and between 2000 and 2012 the coverage of antenatal care substantially increased. These achievements were due to improved access to prenatal care, improved health care reforms addressing mothers and children, and awareness about reproductive health was raised.

Uzbekistan also adopted MDG 6, which deals with combating HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. While Uzbekistan did not have high occurrences of these at the time the MDGs were formulated, the government focused on the prevention of further spread as trends showed the
increase of these within the population. Uzbekistan has focused on improved and larger coverage of testing for these among the population, as well as targeted interventions on a high scale due to the high transmission through contaminated syringes. Increased screening for HIV has lead to 95% of pregnant women having these tests done, and resulted in a decrease from 3.9% of children born with HIV in 2009, to .8% in 2013. Spreading awareness was also a key point of focus, especially targeting youth. National programs have been adopted in order to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS, and there are now ensured access to treatment programs for those living with HIV, with antiretroviral therapy covering more than 75% of HIV-infected people in need. These measures have helped in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS, as well as helping those already infected deal with it better and gives them the capacity to live a healthier life. The instances of tuberculosis and malaria have also decreased, with the mortality rate of Tuberculosis decreasing from 12.3 in 2002 to 3.9 in 2013, and over the course of 2011-2013, no cases of malaria were registered in Uzbekistan.

MDG 7, ensuring environmental stability, is one that Uzbekistan made progress with, but much more progress in this area is still needed. This is because of the practices that occurred within the period where the Soviet Union had control of Uzbekistan and failed to address environmental safety concerns. This left the country with many environmental problems, but despite this the government has made efforts to increase environmental stability. Water and land sources are now better managed, and biodiversity and ecosystems are being more effectively protected. In order to promote renewable energy, projects were carried out to show the benefits and possibilities and the share of renewable energy was up to 11% in 2013. Energy consumption has also decreased, while pollution emissions dropped from 95.4 kg per capita in 2000 to 77.1 kg in 2013. These achievements have been made possible by making management and use of water and land a national priority for the development of the Uzbekistan. The National Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity Conservation were implemented by the government, which helped contribute to progress towards sustainability in the country. The government implemented laws and regulations as well, in order to
create reserves and better protect the land and ecosystems of Uzbekistan.

The final MDG focusing on global partnership for development was implemented using two sub-goals, to effectively use and mobilize aid, and effectively use trade, investments, and transport in order to create sustainable development. Uzbekistan was able to increase the amount of aid it was receiving, as well as increase the effectiveness of the use of this aid. 57.3% of the grants Uzbekistan received went towards the social sector, especially to programs supporting health and education, while the majority of soft loans went towards transportation infrastructure, agriculture, housing, and utilities. In regards to improving trade, Uzbekistan’s foreign trade turnover increased more than four times from 6.2 billion USD to 29.5 billion USD between 2000 and 2013. During this time period, imports also increased from 2.9 billion USD to 13.9 billion USD, and exports rose from 3.3 billion USD to 15.6 billion USD. International donors helped Uzbekistan achieve this growth in international trade, as well as reduce barriers for the country. International development assistance given to Uzbekistan has followed guiding principles such as coordination between donors and the Government regarding the use of aid and improved mobilization and management of aid which have helped the aid be more effective. The aid contributed to Uzbekistan has helped in creating larger access to modern technologies, improving the access to knowledge, and facilitated access to diverse markets through transportation improvements.

## LOOKING FORWARD WITH THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Uzbekistan made great progress in the MDGS, and succeeded in meeting national goals of universal primary education, gender equality in primary and secondary education, and reduction in maternal mortality by one-third. Although other goals may not have been completely achieved, there was and continues to be great progress made towards these objectives. As Uzbekistan moves forward and shifts its attention on the Sustainable Development Goals, the core areas of focus are:

- Effective governance and increased democratization
- Improvements in the economic sector
- Increased quality of education and healthcare
- Environmental sustainability

The government of Uzbekistan believes that by implementing the plans laid out in this report, great strides can be made towards sustainable development and the country can progress as a whole.
AREA OF EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE, JUDICIAL REFORM, AND INCREASED DEMOCRATIZATION

BACKGROUND

The Republic of Uzbekistan was left with a dysfunctional government after the control and oppression of the Soviet Union until 1991, but has made great strides since gaining independence. Since this time, the government has had its struggles, but has also made many achievements that have advanced democratization and good governance. From gaining independence in 1991, Uzbekistan initially worked on the first stage of state building until 2000. This included essential reforms and transitional changes that helped develop a national statehood. After this transition period, the government began focusing on economic development with reforms in political, legislative, judicial, social, and humanitarian actions, as well as achieving a higher level of living standards. In 2002, a bicameral national parliament was established and a system of checks and balances were put in place to ensure more fair legislation. The President then focused more on decentralizing power and liberalizing the political system. The passing of former President Islam Karimov in 2016 led to the current presidency of Shakvat Mirziyoyev, who is determined to further improve the country’s governmental bodies and ensure greater equality for citizens. These steps of progress have been huge for the country in regards to development, but there is still much to be done to further improve the government as well as promote civil participation in politics.

FUTURE GOALS

In order to further progress development in the government and judicial system, the President would like to deepen democratic reforms and establish civil society within the country. This desire by the President and the government of Uzbekistan has led to the adoption of laws and acts to help with these reforms. Some areas that Uzbekistan would like to focus on are improving the structure and institutional frameworks of the courts, strengthening accountability of the government, and continuing to improve institutional frameworks of civil self-governance institutions.
In order to make these achievements possible, the government of Uzbekistan has laid out an action strategy plan for 2017-2021, with reforms of the state and judicial systems being top priorities of this plan. These goals and plans to achieve them are as follows:

PRIORITY AREAS OF THE RULE OF LAW AND FURTHER REFORM OF THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

- Ensuring genuine independence of the judiciary, increasing the authority of the court, democratization and improvement of the judicial system.

- Guaranteeing protection of human rights and freedoms by ensuring the reliable protection of rights and freedoms of citizens in the work of judicial, law enforcement, and regulatory authorities, strengthening guarantees of the right of citizens to own property, and improving the efficiency of enforcement of judicial acts.

- Improving administrative, criminal, civil, and commercial law by improving the efficiency and quality of justice, and introducing modern forms and methods of electronic proceedings and enforcement proceedings.

PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVING THE SYSTEM OF STATE AND PUBLIC CONSTRUCTION

- Strengthen the role of political parties in deepening democratic reforms and modernization of the country. This calls for a vast improvement of the quality of legislative action, which aims to help strengthen the influence of laws in the areas of socio-political, socio-economic, legal, and judicial reform. This also includes strengthening the role of political parties both in public life and society, and forming a healthy competitive environment for these differing parties.

- Reform the public administration and public services through: decentralizing public administration, and strengthening the training, material and social security of civil servants. Also ensuring transparency of public authorities with the addition of modern forms of information concerning the rights, freedoms, and interests of citizens.

- Improve the public management system by introducing effective methods for dialogue with the people, as well as developing civil society institutions and enhancing their social and political activism. Also focus on strengthening the role of the media and protecting journalists’ activities.
- Strengthening the rule of law in the judicial system by improving the system of training, recruitment, retraining, and advanced training of judiciary, law enforcement, and regulatory authorities. Also introducing modern methods to prevent the suppression of crime among law enforcement and authorities, as well as improving their efficiency to strengthen the public’s confidence in the law enforcement system.

- Improving the provision of legal assistance systems and services by improving the efficiency of legal services of state bodies.\textsuperscript{50}

Uzbekistan has also been perceived as having problems with transparency, and the government has been working towards eliminating this concern by implementing laws and programs that hold the government, as well as other sectors of society, more accountable for their power and actions. In the past, the Uzbekistan government has been accused of being unfair to citizens and investors, and to eradicate this, the government has begun implementing the State Program on Anti-Corruption.\textsuperscript{51} With this, they aim to improve many aspects of the government and hold them more accountable for their actions. Uzbekistan believes that in order to have effective governance and participation of civil society, the core shortcomings of the government must first be addressed. This program lays out what is needed by the country in five different areas as followed.

1. FURTHER IMPROVEMENT OF LEGISLATION IN THE FIELD OF COMBATING CORRUPTION

- This includes the addition of laws addressing corruption and increasing transparency in the areas of:
  - Civil service
  - Public-Private Partnership
  - Public procurement
  - Dissemination of legal information
  - State bodies
  - Protection of victims, witnesses, and other participants in criminal proceedings
  - Legal bodies\textsuperscript{52}
2. RAISING LEGAL AWARENESS AND LEGAL CULTURE OF THE POPULATION, THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL TOLERANCE AND CORRUPTION

- Development of a plan of measures to increase the legal awareness and legal culture of the general population
- Implementation of measures to improve partnerships of state bodies with non-profit organizations
- Preparation and distribution of videos, publications, and other materials highlighting the importance of anti-corruption measures
- Addition of action plans to combat corruption in media such as television, radio, print, debates, interviews, and other forms of electronic media
- Implementation of training seminars and conferences addressing corruption for public authorities and businesses

Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis

- Development of special training programs on legal education for educational institutions
- Development of training programs for teachers and government experts focusing on combating corruption

3. MEASURES TO PREVENT CORRUPTION IN ALL SPHERES OF STATE AND SOCIETY ACTIVITY

- Implementation of a quarterly monitoring and evaluation system of public authorities and management
- Introducing more advanced information and communication technologies to enforce departmental regulations more effectively
- Improving legislation and law enforcement practice with increased training programs regarding fair treatment of citizens
- Development of additional transparency measures regarding budgetary funds and expenditures, and increasing the availability of this information to the general public
- Elimination of barriers and simplification of the procedures for licensing and registration
- Creation of equal conditions for business activity and prevention of unfair competition
- Implementation of anti-corruption measures regarding those in the field of education, health, social security, and public services
- Establishing internal control mechanisms and the adoption of codes of business ethics for non-governmental organizations

4. TIMELY DETECTION, SUPPRESSION OF CORRUPTION OFFENSES, THE ELIMINATION OF THEIR CONSEQUENCES, CAUSES AND CONDITIONS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THEM

- Implementation of measures to ensure the rapid detection and combatting of corruption
- Development of stronger inter-agency cooperation and information sharing between state bodies
- Increased technology use by law enforcement agencies in areas of communication
- Improved transparency and efficiency of the courts of justice
5. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, RESEARCH, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN COMBATING CORRUPTION

- Development and adoption of monitoring methods for the implementation of anti-corruption measures
- Development of specialized scientific research in the field of combating corruption
- Increased cooperation with international and regional organizations in combatting corruption (UNODC, UNDP, OECD, OSCE, SCO, EAG, etc.)
- Strengthening of the position of Uzbekistan in international rankings, and showing results of reforms regarding corruption to the international community

Foreign ministers meet with US Secretary of State John Kerry in Samarkand, Uzbekistan

By focusing on reforms to strengthen the government, improve the judicial system, increase civil society, as well as combat corruption in many areas of political life, Uzbekistan is expected to greatly improve. These steps will make the country more stable, and increase the trust of citizens, as well as international partners. These steps are essential to Uzbekistan’s goals of increasing the quality of life, liberalizing political life, ensuring equality and freedoms for everyone, and increasing relationships with international allies.

IMPROVEMENTS IN THE ECONOMIC SECTOR

The Republic of Uzbekistan is one of the leading countries of Central Asia in terms of industrialization and modernization. The Republic of Uzbekistan has had a strong focus on poverty reduction and growing the economy in recent years, and in the past ten years has evidenced success helping populations out of poverty and improving the country’s GDP. Since its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Uzbekistan has gone through a significant transition through efforts towards fostering a market-based economy, though still maintaining government control of production, pricing, and trade. The economy relies largely on agriculture, mainly through the cotton industry, ranking as the fifth largest cotton exporter in the world, and sixth largest producer. Natural gas and gold also serve as primary sources of revenue for the country.
Because of Uzbekistan’s high intellectual capacity compared to the rest of Central Asia, with literacy rates of nearly 100%, the country has reached success in “manufacturing a wide range of modern sedans and trucks, high quality agricultural machinery, chemical goods, textile, food products and building materials.”

THE MAIN INDICATORS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN FOR THE 1 HALF OF 2016

(in % against similar period of 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Growth rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross domestic product</td>
<td>107,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>106,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail turnover</td>
<td>114,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction works</td>
<td>117,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume of utilized investments</td>
<td>111,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry and fisheries</td>
<td>106,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total services</td>
<td>112,9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unemployment: 4.9% (2016)
Population below poverty line: 17% (2011)
GDP: $202.3 billion

Uzbekistan’s GDP has grown by 7.8% (2014) despite the difficulties caused by the world financial crisis. The following shows a breakdown of the country’s GDP growth:

- Industrial output grew by 6.3%
- Agriculture grew by 6.6%
- Services grew by 16.1%
- Development of new foreign markets created an increase in exports to 15.4%
- Share of medium and small enterprise sector in the GDP reached 54%

INDUSTRIES:

AGRICULTURE:

25.9% of Uzbekistan’s population works in the agriculture market. The cotton industry is one of the most important aspects of the Uzbek economy. Because of its importance, the government as recently focused on reforms of the industry, including modernization and technical advancements in order to change their
methods of cultivation and production. This transition has improved transparency in the industry and has made it possible to keep up with the international demand for Uzbekistan’s cotton. Uzbekistan continues with ongoing reforms of the industry.

However, Uzbekistan has also made strides in expanding and diversifying its markets so as to not rely as heavily on cotton monoculture. The environmental crisis of the Aral Sea region has caused water scarcity in the region, making it additionally important to diversify the country’s markets. Thus, continued efforts to modernize and diversify the agriculture industry through government programs ensures “growth of agricultural output by 6.6%, including of fruits and vegetables – 11.2%, potatoes - 9.7%, melons- 10.5%.”

NATURAL GASES:
Gas and oil make up another one of the largest industries in Uzbekistan. Following independence in 1991, Uzbekistan developed the industry and became self-sufficient in 1995, ceasing to import gases and oils – a remarkable feat considering the economic crisis domestically and internationally at the time – and now satisfies 96% of the country’s energy needs. Uzbekistan is also rich in hydrocarbon reserves.

China is one of Uzbekistan largest trade partners for natural gases, and China has largely invested in the natural gases of Uzbekistan. Russia has intentionally decreased its import of natural gas from Uzbekistan.

WORKERS’ RIGHTS AND WAGES:
Since 2016, Uzbekistan has made positive strides in economic structural transformations in the following ways:

- 11% increase in income of the population
- 15% increase in worker salaries of budget organizations
- 12.1% increase in pensions and social benefits
- 726,000 newly employed citizens
- 438,500 graduates of educational institutions

The country has made significant improvements in labor reform, phasing out child labor according to an International Labor Organization Report from February 1, 2017. Uzbekistan also continues to eliminate forced labor by implementing action plans, also recognized as improvements by the ILO.

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS:

“Uzbekistan is committed to pursuing an open, friendly and pragmatic policy towards its nearest neighbors” (Republic of Uzbekistan).
TRADE AGREEMENTS:

Uzbekistan has one of the most dynamic growing economies of Asia and Europe, and has trade agreements within the Commonwealth of Independent States (the alliance of former Soviet states: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan), along with USA, Japan, China, Korea, EU countries, that make Uzbekistan’s market for goods highly competitive.\(^7\)

Top export partners with Uzbekistan, (2015)\(^7\):
- Switzerland 25.9%
- China 17.6%
- Kazakhstan 14.2%
- Turkey 9.9%
- Russia 8.4%
- Bangladesh 6.9%

Uzbekistan most widely imports from:\(^8\)
- China 20.8%
- Russia 20.8%
- South Korea 11.9%
- Kazakhstan 10.8%
- Turkey 4.6%
- Germany 4.4%

Uzbekistan is working to strengthen economic trade relations and investment with the Russian Federation, and through agreements such as the Treaty on Strategic Partnership of 2004, the Treaty on Allied Relations of 2005, the Declaration on Deepening Strategic Partnership between the Republic of Uzbekistan and Russia of 2012.\(^8\) These treaties serve to enhance the stability and security of the region by promoting positive neighborly relations. Similarly, by building bilateral cooperation with other CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries, the Republic of Uzbekistan is fostering relations based on “equality, mutual benefit, respect and consideration of interests of each other.”\(^8\) Uzbekistan also has close ties with the EU and NATO for trade, investment, transferring of technologies, and plans to strategically strengthen economic partnership with China.\(^8\)

In April of 2017, an industrial trade fair took place in Navoiy with the purpose of strengthening cooperation of both small business and large industrial corporations along with private entrepreneurial companies.\(^8\)

INVESTMENT:

The Republic of Uzbekistan has experienced increased foreign direct investment because of
important measures taken by the country itself to improve investment from partner countries.\textsuperscript{85}

In addition, by increasing exports of gas, gold, and copper, the country has increased revenue that makes it possible to finance greater investment and salaries to encourage consumption and growth.\textsuperscript{86} Since these reforms, investments in Uzbekistan’s economy have increased to above $100 billion USD, with foreign direct investments making up $35 billion USD of that.\textsuperscript{87} Over 4200 widely recognized enterprises have invested in the market of Uzbekistan, such as Mercedes-Benz, Nestle, Coca-Cola, General Motors, MAN, Isuzu Motors, CNPC, Petronas, LG, Gazprom, Lukoil, British-American Tobacco, Carlsberg, etc.\textsuperscript{88}

Foreign investors investing in Uzbekistan’s market have protected rights under the Uzbek “Law On Guarantees and Measures of Foreign Investors’ Rights Protection” to disallow violation of investment rights and protect property rights of foreign investors.\textsuperscript{89} Uzbekistan also provides significant incentives and preferences for investors, such as tax and customs incentives, making it worthwhile to seek investment in the market.\textsuperscript{90} By providing such incentives, the government hopes to facilitate an attractive environment for investment and establish “effective operation of modern high-tech industries, production of domestically and globally competitive products with high added value.”\textsuperscript{91}

Within Uzbekistan, capital investment has increased by 11.8\% as a result of active investment policy with the objective of promoting modernization, technological advancement in Uzbekistan’s main industries, and improving transportation/communication infrastructure.\textsuperscript{92}

**CURRENT PROJECTS:**

During the end of his presidency before his death in September of 2016, former President Karimov consistently implemented certain priorities that helped to create sustainable economic growth in Uzbekistan.\textsuperscript{93} For example, “deepening structural reforms in the economy and modernizing the country, ensuring macroeconomic balance” such as through encouraging active investment policy with the objective of promoting modernization, technological advancement in Uzbekistan’s main industries, and improving transportation/communication infrastructure.\textsuperscript{94}

In Uzbekistan, there are 8.9 thousand projects for socioeconomic development have been implemented, with 2.6 thousand in relation to industry.\textsuperscript{95}

In the capital city of Tashkent, January 14, 2017, the Uzbekistan’s Cabinet Ministers completed a comprehensive analysis of the country’s socioeconomic development in order to establish Uzbekistan’s main successes of 2016 and areas of focus moving forward into 2017.\textsuperscript{96}

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev highlighted the importance of the “Uzbek model of development” in addition to structural adjustments with the economy of Uzbekistan and modernization plans developed under former president Islam Karimov, which “ensured maintenance of stable and sustainably high rates of economic growth and macroeconomic balance, increase of the level and quality of life of the population.”\textsuperscript{97}
Tashkent, capital of Uzbekistan

The World Bank is helping to fund important government projects that will help the country diversify agricultural markets and move away from a focus on cotton. The cotton industry is one of the most important aspects of the Uzbek economy. Because of its importance, the government has recently focused on reforms of the industry, including modernization and technical advancements in order to change their methods of cultivation and production. This transition has improved transparency in the industry and has made it possible to keep up with the international demand for Uzbekistan’s cotton. Uzbekistan continues with ongoing reforms of the industry.

PROGRESS:

Importantly, the GDP of Uzbekistan increased by 7.8% in 2016, industrial production grew by 6.6%, retail trade by 14.4%, creating a state budget surplus of .1% of the country’s GDP. This increase in foreign trade is considered secured. The country’s inflation rate in 2016 was 5.6%, which did not exceed the projected inflation rate. 2016 investment of US dollars into the Uzbekistan economy constituted 9.6% more than that of 2015, a total of 16.6 billion dollars.

FUTURE GOALS:

With the knowledge that world prices are not expected to go back to previous levels, the Republic of Uzbekistan now focuses on maintaining their economic stability through new drivers of economic growth, diversification, and job creation.

During the meeting in Tashkent on January 14, 2017, with the Cabinet of Ministers, President Mirziyoyev laid out the following three priorities for 2017:

1. “Development of complex measures on eleven priorities of economic and social program for 2017”
2. “Ensuring critical analysis of state of affairs in the spheres of the economy, social sphere and regions of the country on a systemic basis, making amendments on this basis to main directions and priorities of deepening the economic reforms”
3. “Increasing personal responsibility of the heads and senior officials for end results, their compliance with strict discipline and strengthening effectiveness of the management system in accordance with increased modern requirements”

President Mirziyoyev has also highlighted the importance of the following tasks:
▪ “Realization of newly adopted targeted programs on construction of affordable housing”
▪ “Development and modernization of road-transport”
▪ “Engineering-communications and social infrastructure”
▪ “Ensuring improvement of the quality of life of the population in city and rural areas” (Tashkent, January 14, 2017)

With these in mind, Uzbekistan is seeking to make improvements in structural reforms, modernization efforts, and diversification of markets, and is pursuing these efforts through programs to be implemented between 2015-19. The country is also focusing on increasing private investments by improving the business environment of corporations and small businesses with the overall objective of increasing exports and creating higher quality jobs for citizens.

**HEALTH SECTOR**

**BACKGROUND**

The constitution of Uzbekistan guarantees free access to healthcare for all citizens of the country regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, income, or any other determining factor. With Uzbekistan being such a newly independent country there have been some bumps along the road, however, the Uzbek government has made it clear that their main focus is bettering the country and improving healthcare access to its citizens. Although the constitution clearly lays out legal practices for doctors, nurses, and medical personnel, there have been issues with bribery and corruption within the medical field, which has limited its ability to provide strong healthcare to all citizens. The government of Uzbekistan believes that is one of the main issues facing the healthcare system of the country and is looking for ways to address the issues of bribery and corruption, as well as provide more qualified doctors to areas where healthcare access is limited due to geographic location and isolation.

Since Uzbekistan’s independence from the Soviet Union on September 1st, 1991, the country has had to recreate its governmental structure and economy. With the country’s economy being worked on, many doctors left the country of Uzbekistan for better-paid work in Russia where they were guaranteed jobs. Thus, Uzbekistan was left with a lack of doctors and did not have enough money to afford more. This put many citizens’ health at risk, so it has become a main priority by the new president to address corruption within the...
healthcare system through training programs and spreading awareness on the issue.

Since the new president Shavkat Mirziyoyev took office in September 2016 there have been strong pushes to make governmental sectors, such as healthcare, more transparent to the public.\textsuperscript{112} This is helping citizens regain the trust in their government that may have been lost due to the problems regarding unfairness in the healthcare sector.

After the Millennium Development Goals ended in 2015, Uzbekistan completed a portion of MDG 6, which was to halt and begin reversing HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in the country. This example is one that highlights the way in which deadly diseases can be combated with the correct funding and procedures in order to aid all citizens across the country. Today, as far as malaria is concerned, the goal has been reached.\textsuperscript{113} With proper programs and funding, the other goals can be reached with similar tactics.

\textbf{PROGRESS}

In the time since the Republic of Uzbekistan has gained independence, it has been able to rely greatly on itself for funding of healthcare programs. However, not all healthcare programs could be funded through taxpayer money and therefore external aid has been necessary to create and maintain the success of many health care programs, including the one that eradicated malaria.\textsuperscript{114,115} These healthcare programs have helped the citizens of the country utilize their constitutional right to free and adequate healthcare for all.

When many of the healthcare programs began, it was the early 1990s and the country was reinventing itself after its independence from the former Soviet Union. A large portion of their budget went to public social sectors like healthcare and education, among others. But while these new sectors became vitally important to the wellbeing of the Uzbek population, it also created issues when expensive sectors like these needed updating every few years.\textsuperscript{116} Hospitals and clinics in Uzbekistan are trying to give citizens access to their constitutional right to healthcare; however, it has grown more and more difficult to do so when the health centers and their equipment require updates that the Uzbek government does not have the budget for.\textsuperscript{117} This has made it difficult to cater to the growing number of citizens each year.
AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

It has been noted that the Uzbekistan government does not have enough funds to support all of its social programs aimed at bettering the lives of its citizens. Within the healthcare system alone there are some specifics that the new president is looking to address:

- Improve emergency services so that citizens get quicker responses from ambulances and hospital workers.\(^{118}\)
- Restrain drug prices so that all citizens may have access to affordable medicine and so they do not have to rely on outside sources to receive treatments for medical problems.\(^{119}\)
- Modernize hospitals and clinics so that all citizens who visit them may receive adequate treatments from doctors and clinicians and know that they are receiving reliable treatment.\(^{120}\)
- Root out bribery and corruption within the healthcare sector so that all citizens regardless of income may receive free and equal treatment, which is stated in the constitution of Uzbekistan.\(^{121}\)
- Continue progress made on dropping maternal mortality rate by providing better doctors and surgeons to help pregnant women through birthing process.\(^{122}\)
- Reduce child mortality by improving quality of services provided to children, especially neonatal care.\(^{123}\)
- Continue lowering transmission of HIV to children through pregnant mothers.\(^{124}\)
- Lower transmission of HIV/AIDS to other people through sexual intercourse or IDU and unsafe blood or blood products.\(^{125}\)
- Create educational programs to educate the population on preventatives and ways to protect oneself from becoming infected with HIV/AIDS.\(^{126}\)
- Build more hospitals and clinics in rural areas of the country so that more citizens have access to adequate healthcare where they previously have had difficulty accessing it.\(^{127}\)

These are some of the main concerns from the Uzbekistan government on ways to aid the country in achieving its healthcare goals.

DISEASES

Throughout the last couple of decades, the people of Uzbekistan have faced serious health issues that have rendered the country unable to provide healthcare to all citizens equally. The rapid growth of HIV/AIDS...
throughout the country over the past several years has threatened the well being of many people who, due to the social stigma around the taboo topic, do not seek adequate treatment.\textsuperscript{128} Similarly, there are no state-run programs designed to educate the public and to take down the stigma surrounding the disease.\textsuperscript{129}

HIV/AIDS has become a very large issue over the last few years due to increased drug usage and needle sharing between users, as well as unprotected sexual activity between infected individuals. The government of Uzbekistan has been looking for different ways to address the issue of this virus since the early 2000s, but due to the social stigma surrounding it, it has had difficulty relaying accurate information to the public. The government has, however, introduced a decree making universal HIV testing for pregnant women free in order to help aid the pregnant women through her pregnancy and birthing process as well as provide medical treatment to the infant immediately.\textsuperscript{130}

Tuberculosis has become a prominent disease that is infecting many people throughout the country. This is caused by unsafe drinking water and unsanitary uses of water. There are programs supported by the Uzbek government aimed at reducing the number of infected people as well as proving full health care coverage to those already infected.\textsuperscript{131} A program supported by USAID currently works within rural communities to teach children and adults how to properly wash their hands.\textsuperscript{132} This program alone has greatly aided the country’s number of infected individuals with TB through education, as well as provided better treatment for those already infected.

Malaria was another very dangerous disease that was claiming the lives of thousands of people a year until the government provided immunizations to all its citizens free of cost and the cases of malaria dropped to non-threatening levels.\textsuperscript{133} This type of response by the Uzbek government, in terms of eliminating a problem, is the kind of response that is trying to be achieved with all other diseases and infections. However, the issues arise with funding the programs to do so. With outside support for programs like the one that eradicated malaria it is possible that within the next couple of years Uzbekistan could see a
sharp decline of HIV/AIDS infected people as well as Tuberculosis among young children and rural citizens.

The country of Uzbekistan has focused greatly on providing all its citizens with adequate health care and treatments and is actively looking for ways to improve the livelihood of its citizens. These programs, however, require outside support and funding to be achieved.

FUTURE PLANS

Uzbekistan is on its way to improving its healthcare system. There is still a ways to go in terms of giving all citizens equal access to up-to-date facilities and treatment but the country has been open about its clear focus to reach that goal. External aid is necessary to accomplish many of the goals previously listed, as the country cannot provide sufficient means of support for all necessary improvements previously listed. In order to raise healthy, active children as well as treat adults with equality and affordability the government is trying to implement programs funded by outside organizations, similar to USAID combating malaria. These programs can be implemented throughout the country so that citizens of Uzbekistan will be able to depend on their country for better health care services and programs.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Environmental protection and water management are high priorities for the development of Uzbekistan. The Aral Sea crisis is one of the largest issues facing Uzbekistan and is a major barrier to development of the region.

BRIEF HISTORY

The Aral Sea used to be the fourth largest lake in the world. The Aral Sea region in Central Asia was a vibrant region, home to 60 million people, 38 species of fish and animals, and 638 plant species. The land was fertile and was vital to the economy of Uzbekistan. Fishing was a major industry, providing a living for 80% of locals with 30,000-35,000 tons of fish caught annually. The land was used for raising livestock and growing crops. The fertile land provided a livelihood for over 100,000
people. The Aral Sea also regulated the region’s climate because of the sheer size of the body of water.

The Aral Sea crisis began under the Soviet Union and the government of Uzbekistan has worked to mitigate the crisis since independence in 1991. The Aral Sea used to be a major resource for Uzbekistan and it provided many people with their livelihoods of agriculture and fishing. The Aral Sea began declining in the 1960s when the Soviet Union implemented large-scale irrigation projects that diverted the water from the Amu Darya and Syr Darya for irrigated agriculture. Since then, the Aral Sea has been steadily declining because of the reduced inflow of the rivers. The irrigation canals built by the Soviet Union were highly inefficient and a majority of water was wasted. Soon after independence, Uzbekistan entered into water management treaties with neighboring countries in order to protect the resource. The Aral Sea environmental tragedy is a transnational problem, which makes it more difficult for Uzbekistan to solve without the help of the international community.

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS**

The desiccation of the Aral Sea is a major environmental disaster and has heavily impacted the welfare of people living in the region. The surface area of the lake decreased from 68,000 km² in 1960 to 14,280 km² by 2013.
km² in 2010. Salinity also increased from 10 g/L to 130 g/L. The Aral Sea is now two separate lakes, the North Aral Sea and the South Aral Sea. The South Aral Sea is the only part of the once massive lake that resides in Uzbekistan.

This tragedy has caused numerous problems for the people of the Aral Sea region. The salinization of the water and the soil has destroyed the livelihoods of the people because the plants, animals, and fish have died off. The soil is no longer fertile, so the crops are not productive or require high uses of pesticides and fertilizers. This has led to increased poverty in the region, which is the most impoverished area in Uzbekistan. Agriculture is a major sector of the economy, so the large loss of fertile land negatively impacts the economy of Uzbekistan. Cotton is a major export for Uzbekistan, which is the fifth largest exporter of cotton in the world. The loss of biodiversity is a loss to the earth in general and has impacted the ecosystem of the region, which has turned into a desert. Water quality of the river and drinking water have also deteriorated because of the amount of dust, pesticides and other toxins in the area.

The desiccation of the Aral Sea has impacts on the weather and climate as well. There are frequent dust storms because of the large desert and there are hotter summers and colder winters without the large body of water to regulate the weather. The dust storms blow up chemicals from pesticides and industrial projects, which has negative health implications. The changes in weather patterns have affected the region’s agriculture. The region is further contaminated from the lingering...
effects of Soviet-era chemical and biological weapons testing on the former Vozrozhdenye Island.\textsuperscript{150} The Aral Sea catastrophe affects other parts of the world, as well. Sandstorms carry dust thousands of kilometers away and toxins from the Aral region have been discovered in other parts of the world, all the way to the poles.\textsuperscript{151}

SOLUTIONS AND PROGRESS

Uzbekistan has expressed desire for help from the international community to help solve a problem that affects the entire planet. The International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) was founded in 1993 and Uzbekistan was a key founder of the IFAS. The goals of the IFAS are to preserve the biological heritage and to reduce the negative impacts of the crisis on the environment and the livelihoods of the people.\textsuperscript{152} As chair of the IFAS 2013-2016, Uzbekistan helped to implement many projects to improve the conditions of the Aral Sea region.\textsuperscript{153} The President of Uzbekistan initiated a program to mitigate the consequences of the Aral Sea disaster in a document that was presented to the 68\textsuperscript{th} session of the UN General Assembly and fully supported by the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.\textsuperscript{154} Uzbekistan has been a strong component of the IFAS since its creation, even bringing the UN’s attention to the crisis in 1993.\textsuperscript{155} The IFAS, and Uzbekistan as a strong partner, is a critical institution for coordinating the cooperation of states to solve this terrible environmental problem.

The Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC) has also helped manage the water resources among the Central Asian nations. The ICWC has provided an overseeing body to drastically reduce the possibility of conflict over water resources in the region.

Improvements made through the Aral Sea Basin Program, supported by the World Bank:

- Improving irrigation effectiveness
- Increasing area of irrigated land with adequate water supply
- Increasing crop yields by 20%
- Decreasing water salinity, high salinity areas reduced by 55%
- Establishing 65 Water Consumer Associations
- Providing technical and support to these associations\textsuperscript{156}

The President of Uzbekistan signed a decree in 2017 to devote US$2.6 billion to the State Program for the Development of the Aral Sea Region.\textsuperscript{157} This program aims to improve the living conditions for people in the region and will last for five years. The money will go towards infrastructure projects for water, sanitation, health, transportation, communication, and education.\textsuperscript{158}
FUTURE GOALS

- Social and economic development of the region

  - Protecting the health and well-being of the people in the Aral Sea region is a priority for the Republic of Uzbekistan. Though many improvements in quality of life have been made in line with the MDGs, there remains areas of health and safety to focus on.  

  - Ensuring decent living conditions for the inhabitants of the Aral Sea region is critical for the continued progress of social and economic development in Uzbekistan.

  - Producing higher crop yields in the Aral Sea region will further improve the economic prospects of the people living there. Diversifying agricultural products will help in this regard because cotton uses a large amount of water. Establishing various crops that can grow in the Aral Sea Basin will help the economic development of the region.

  - Improving irrigation effectiveness through infrastructure projects will not only benefit the agricultural sector, but also the overall well-being of inhabitants. The wasteful use of water because of outdated and faulty irrigation infrastructure caused the Aral Sea crisis and must be prevented from continuing the problem.

- Preserving the Aral Sea Basin ecosystem

  - Desertification continues to be a large-scale problem in the Aral Sea Basin. Preventing the further desiccation of the Aral Sea is a goal that is shared by all of Central Asia, and should continue to be a high priority for the international community as a whole.

  - Recovering biodiversity of the basin is also important for improving the ecosystem. Any loss of species is a tragedy for the earth, so attempts to reestablish plant and animal species to the region are an important goal.

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*I think this is a collective responsibility, not only for the nations of Central Asia but the whole world.*

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-- UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 2010
Water management

- Establishing methods and managing techniques to ensure reasonable water consumption is important for the health of the region.\(^{165}\)

- Fairly managing transnational water resources is an issue that could be improved upon with the support of the international community. The water resources of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya are finite and must be fairly shared among the countries of the region.\(^{166}\)

- Maintaining strict compliance with international norms is another area of priority for the Republic of Uzbekistan. It is important that international laws and norms are upheld in the management of water resources in order to prevent conflicts.\(^{167}\)

CONCLUSION

The country’s significant intellectual potential, a result of high standards of modern education, is one of the main factors in Uzbekistan’s successful development. With more than 300,000 students studying throughout hundreds of universities domestically and abroad, they are preparing to enter over 850 professions.\(^{168}\)

President Mirziyoyev has named 2017 the “Year of dialogue with people and human interests,” (compared to 2016’s “year of the healthy mother and child”), and plans to use this strategy as a way to fix unsolved problems and set priorities for economic and social programs.\(^{169}\) With development of the economy, Uzbekistan will see better governance, more transparency, and stronger stability—all priorities under the current administration. The structural reforms of focus will enhance economic growth by diversifying production and expanding the markets.

The development of the Aral Sea region is an important future goal. The Aral Sea crisis is an ongoing environmental disaster that affects the entire world. It is important to preserve the ecosystem of the Aral Sea Basin and to fairly manage the water resources in the region. The Republic of Uzbekistan is deeply committed to environmental protection and to the preservation of the Aral Sea.
The Republic of Uzbekistan believes that by making the reforms listed in this report, the country will continue to develop and this will have positive effects on its people and international partners. The government is optimistic about meeting these goals and believes that the Republic of Uzbekistan has great potential to achieve progress in many of its areas of focus.
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