



**THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN  
TO THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM  
MISSIONS TO THE EUROPEAN UNION AND NATO**

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**BACKBONE OF PROGRESS**

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On 27 June 2017, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan signed a decree on the arrangement of celebratory activities occasioned to the 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary of national independence.

The festival is designated in the framework of practical, spiritual-enlightenment works as well as a promotional program that is built on the principal maxim **“Uzbekistan worth sacrificing for”**. The action plan is to be elaborated in accordance with the government program “The Year of Dialogue with the People and of Human Interests” and the Strategy of Actions for the Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan along Five Priority Areas in 2017-2021.

Thus, what are these five priority areas like? It would be appropriate to clarify them here:

The first track. *Enhancement of democratic reforms and consolidation of the role of political parties and houses of the Oliy Majlis in the modernization of the country.*

The second track. *Securing the rule of law and reforming the judicial system.*

The third track. *Development and liberalization of the economy.*

The fourth track. *Advancement of the social sphere.*

The fifth track. *Provision for security, harmony among ethnic groups in the country and religious tolerance, conducting balanced, mutually advantageous and constructive foreign policy.*

We can illustrate the history of independence by enquiring into what has been done in these areas. Then the subject matter will be clearer.

So, what does the preparation for festival in line with the government program “The Year of Dialogue with the People and of Human Interests” stand for?

On 25 September 2016, Shavkat Mirziyoyev (then Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the acting President of the country) opened his virtual/online reception. The course for the dialogue with the people kicked off from this day.

In the 4 December 2016 ballot, Shavkat Mirziyoyev elected President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the basis of democratic choice. That brought about a new period in the history of our nation.

During the election campaigning, the portrait of Shavkat Mirziyoyev, candidate for the post of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, on public display across the country, had a subtitle underneath it: **“We shall build the future together”**.

On 7 December 2016, at the festive meeting occasioned to the 24<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev delivered a keynote speech entitled **“Securing the rule of law and human interests is guarantee of the country’s progress and prosperity”**. President-elect proposed to designate the pending year 2017 as the one of dialogue with the people and of human interests.

At the joint session of houses of the Oliy Majlis occasioned to the ceremony of presidential inauguration, Shavkat Mirziyoyev’s speech came under the title **“We shall build the free and peaceful state of Uzbekistan together with our courageous and noble people”**.

As it may be seen, there is a logical bond among those slogans and speeches. They imply, first and foremost, a union of people and the government.

The virtual reception of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan has been functioning ever since its inception in September 2016. Similarly designated receptions have been set up at all organizations and agencies and local government bodies across the nation.

The dialogue with citizens helps clarify the challenges faced by people in real life. And the general public is far from being dishonest to be waiting for the government to find solution to all problems they have. However, there are issues that ought to be addressed solely by the authorities or together with people.

The enlightenment program approved to the preparation for and celebration of the 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the national independence clearly streamlines organizational, spiritual-enlightenment activities under the motto **“We will build the great future together with our courageous and noble people”** directed at the modernization of the country, enhancement of democratic reforms, consolidation of the role of the parliament and political parties as well as the quality and effectiveness of governance system, covering the efforts aimed at state and nation building through boosting the role of mass media and civil society institutions.

Our country has passed an absolutely unique and historic path over the past years. Who has accomplished that objective? Of course, our courageous and noble people have, under the guidance of state authorities. Hence, again our development rests on this merger of the people and government. No one country has ever secured its noble ends without that union.

Another principle is also very closely connected to the arguments we put forward. It says, **“People are not supposed to serve the government agencies, but it is the latter who should serve the former”**.

Over the past 26 years, our people has built own national state. And nation-building is rather an imperative and complicated stage in the history of people and country.

It gets especially clear if one imagines how it was thorny for a people who were forced to live under a colony system for about one and a half century.

**First**, the people were devoid of political rights. It was compulsory to act and behave in accordance with the directive of the former ‘center’ on every issue.

**Second**, economically our republic had been biased in development, i.e. it was designed to cultivate and deliver raw cotton, with menacing repercussions for the country and people. Because the “golden” rule of economics states that one who sells raw materials will not be well-off. Only 8-10 percent of 5 million tons of cotton produced in Uzbekistan was processed and reprocessed, while the rest used to be taken away and thus the principal profit was secured by other republics who reprocessed the crude.

To visualize the circumstances more clearly let us to recall the statement voiced by Islam Karimov on 4 June 1990, which reads:

*“... The republic is in the bottom grade in the Soviet Union across all essential economic and social indicators. It ranks 12<sup>th</sup> in terms of GDP per capita and it is half the average indicator in the Union.*

*In industrial efficiency, the republic's indicator is 40 percent lesser, and in terms of agricultural effectiveness it is twice as low as in the USSR. The production of consumer goods per capita is also 40 percent of the average in the Union. We are in the bottom range in terms of income and consumption of essential products.*

*In general, the people in Uzbekistan are consuming meat, milk and dairy, eggs twice as little as the people in the country as a whole. The share of people who earn less than 75 soums is 12 percent in the USSR, whereas the figure in our republic reaches 45 percent.”*

**Third**, the national spiritual foundation was inflicted a heavy damage. Despite the fact 75 percent of the population was ethnic Uzbeks and 15 percent of representatives of other ethnic groups spoke Uzbek well, it never was granted the status of state language. Over the years of colonialism, the residents of Uzbekistan were forced to learn first Arabic, then Latin, and eventually the Cyrillic alphabets. The aim was to make people devoid of its own fundamentals and legacy, and thus forget its own past. Our sacred religion was outraged, and all traditions and shrines were destroyed. Although, every nation develops on its own historical cores. It was confirmed plainly in the years of Uzbekistan's independence.

The greatest wealth achieved in the years of independence is the transformation in world outlook and the mindset of the people. Hence, again the idea that “Spirituality is our most powerful and efficient weapon” will be our slogan.

The history of humanity is suggestive of the truth that no country can advance alone, because numerous problems and issues in the world are resolved in a friendly atmosphere and jointly with partners. That is the reason why Uzbekistan follows the principle of ensuring the security and harmony among ethnic groups and inter-religious tolerance, cementing the sovereignty and independence through spearheading balanced, mutually advantageous and constructive foreign policy, **embarking not on competition, but cooperation with neighboring nations, and seeking solution to problems in our region together.**

Telling the truth, the world community has but to listen to Uzbekistan when addressing issues concerning Central Asia. The friendly relations with our neighbors suit our national interests, and our standing in the international arena requires it so.

Bolstering the national independence and protecting it never loses importance. We should realize that our pressing task is to provide for border security and maintain peace, enhance the capabilities of our armed forces, live vigilant in an era where the danger of mass culture, extremism, terrorism, radicalism has been mounting, so have rivalry and antagonism.

The most precious place for human being is Motherland.

**Our Uzbekistan is unique and peerless. We can unreservedly be proud of it. That should be backed by its rich history, the present progress and the bright future.**