

EEF.DEL/35/16
14 September 2016

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

**STATEMENT BY MR. BAKHTIYER ABDUSAMATOV,
CHAIRPERSON OF THE STATE COMMITTEE OF THE
REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN FOR NATURE PROTECTION, AT THE
CONCLUDING MEETING OF THE 24th OSCE ECONOMIC AND
ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

Prague, 14 to 16 September 2016

**Strengthening stability and security through co-operation
on good governance**

Opening session

Mr. Chairperson,
Heads of Delegations,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Uzbekistan to welcome you, distinguished colleagues, to today's event and express our gratitude to the OSCE and the Czech Government for the warm reception and hospitality.

Traditionally, this Forum brings all of us together to discuss the most pressing issues of relevance to the current situation in terms of the development of the countries of the region.

We believe that the themes of the Forum this year, namely good governance, public-private partnership, and the impact of environmental management on economic development, stability and security are important and relevant issues on the global agenda.

“Reforms – not for the sake of reforms, but for the people” – the realization of this noble idea put forward by the first President of our country, and the steps taken to establish a socially oriented market economy have enabled us to improve significantly the standard of living and quality of life. In that context, we can safely say that ensuring the reliable protection of the interests of private enterprise and effectively removing various bureaucratic obstacles and unwarranted interference in its activities should be a priority in government policy. A clear example of this is the legislative, regulatory and legal framework adopted in Uzbekistan to restrict the powers of the regulatory authorities and their unwarranted interference in the activities of private entrepreneurs, which made it possible to introduce an evaluation system for draft laws and regulations with a view to identifying not only corruptive factors in these laws but also the conditions for the commission of other offences.

Uzbekistan's economy has grown almost sixfold since independence. The industrial share of the economy rose from 14 to 34 per cent. Over the past 11 years, the gross domestic product has increased at a rate of no lower than 8 per cent on average, and the real per capita income has grown more than twelvefold. Today, Uzbekistan is one of the five fastest growing economies in the world.

As for partnership with civil society, we can say on the basis of our experience that in 25 years of independence the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the robust legislation created on the basis of that Constitution and the expansion of democratic reforms in the country have ensured the protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens, all forms of property, and the active involvement of citizens in the government of the country.

In particular, enshrining the legal basis for safeguarding the activities of social organizations and protecting their rights and legal interests in legislative acts, and promoting the development of civil society institutions in Uzbekistan have greatly boosted the community involvement of civil society institutions, ensuring the transparency of government bodies and expanding the participation of all stakeholders in decision-making, *inter alia* on economic issues.

The adoption of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Environmental Control was an important development. It establishes the rights, obligations and powers of the environmental monitoring bodies and provides the legal framework for the active involvement of all civil society institutions in environmental protection and solving ecological problems.

Ladies and gentlemen,

At a time when the international community's attention continues to be focused on the unprecedented scale and destructive nature of the problem of global environmental degradation and climate change, we have to say something about the impact of environmental good governance on economic development, stability and security. We have witnessed first-hand how the ill-considered control of natural watercourses and the construction of large-scale hydraulic structures on the region's major rivers have led to one of the greatest global environmental catastrophes in recent history – the Aral Sea crisis, which has brought unprecedented disasters and irreparable damage to the socio-economic and environmental situation in a region with a population of more than 60 million. In that connection, we believe that every State, while exercising the right to pursue its own national environmental policy, should observe the generally recognized principles and norms of contemporary international law, without causing harm to the development of neighbouring countries and taking account of their interests.

As an active participant in the global environmental protection policy, Uzbekistan is purposefully moving forward along the path of sustainable development, creating a favourable environment for the well-being of the population. Today, we can certainly be proud of the results achieved in areas such as improving air, water and land resource quality, expanding access to clean drinking water, and enhancing the economy's energy efficiency. At the same time, we should like to reiterate that Uzbekistan is committed to constructive co-operation in the use of transboundary water resources. We firmly believe that the norms enshrined in the international conventions on water, namely equitable and reasonable

utilization of transboundary water resources, not causing harm and taking account of the interests of all the basin countries should serve as the framework for their joint use.

Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished Forum participants,

Uzbekistan regards the OSCE as a platform for equal dialogue among States, in which the questions of security, the economy and the human dimension should be well-balanced and equally important. We also attach great importance to the development of mutually beneficial co-operation with the leading countries of Europe and remain committed to pursuing an open, considerate and pragmatic policy with respect to our closest neighbours. At the same time, we should like to share our proposals and priority areas for co-operation.

First and foremost, this involves the expansion of international co-operation in jointly solving problems connected with the desiccation of the Aral Sea, including improving the well-being of the people living there, developing environmentally friendly forms of economic activity, re-establishing ecosystems and biodiversity, and preserving and protecting the animal and plant world. Secondly, the creation of favourable conditions for access to state-of-the-art environmentally clean technologies. In this context, we are ready to consider promising areas, such as:

- The development of a system to collect, sort and recycle waste;
- The introduction of state-of-the-art technologies in the area of alternative energy and energy efficiency;
- The implementation of joint measures for preventing land degradation, improving the condition of reclaimed land, using water-saving technologies and reducing atmospheric pollution.

Thirdly, the continuation of dialogue to ensure the equitable and reasonable utilization of transboundary water resources in the region on the basis of the norms of the international conventions on water and the principles of not causing harm and taking account of the interests of all the transboundary river basin countries.

Distinguished participants,

In conclusion, we firmly believe that this conference will enable us to discuss and identify mutually beneficial areas for future co-operation.

I wish everyone a successful and enjoyable conference.

Thank you for your attention.