



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC
OF UZBEKISTAN TO THE OSCE

**Statement by Ambassador Sherzod Asadov,
Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the OSCE
at the 1253rd Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
(December 19, 2019)**

Mr. Chairperson,

On December 7, 2019, on the occasion 27th anniversary of adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan President of the Republic of Uzbekistan H.E. Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev delivered a speech where he gave an analysis of ongoing reforms in the country and preparatory process to the upcoming parliamentary elections to be held on December 22, 2019.

In this regard, we would like to briefly acquaint our distinguished colleagues with main topics of the speech, which is based on the interests of the people of Uzbekistan and the principle of ensuring openness.

In his speech, the head of Uzbekistan noted that the Constitution of Uzbekistan that was adopted in the early years of independence defines and guarantees the rights and obligations of an individual, society and the state in their relations. Ensuring the supremacy of the Constitution and laws in Uzbekistan is the key criteria for building a country based on democratic principles. These basic principles are intertwined with peace and progress. They are ultimately the results of all reforms.

Issues that were in the spotlight of the speech include: this year alone more than 70 laws, over 350 presidential decrees and resolutions were adopted in order to improve lives of the people. Effectiveness, however, is directly linked to the implementation of these laws and foreseeing potential problems. Considering this, the Parliament, the government along with the Supreme Court must use effective mechanisms of ensuring execution of laws being passed in the country. In this regard, it is crucial to train cadres, raise qualifications, ensure legal awareness among citizens, as well as develop evaluation criteria of responsible heads of state bodies based on their knowledge of laws.

Public control in ensuring Constitution and rule of law was mentioned in the speech as well. As stated in the speech, today our public has woken up.

Now the people are learning to directly evaluate the work and activities of various-level officials and freely express their opinions.

Notably, this year the state budget was widely scrutinized and passed in the spirit of transparency. This indicates an increase of the sense of ownership and responsibility among citizens of Uzbekistan for the processes taking place in the country.

The President of Uzbek also highlighted the necessity of increasing engagement of the mass media in ensuring the rule of law. Some of the achievements in this realm included increased role and responsibility of mass media activities in social networking platforms, establishment of effective activities of the press services of state bodies and the enlargement of social partnership between the authorities and the media.

Updating and systematization of existing legislation in accordance with ongoing reforms is yet another important direction voiced in the speech. In this regard, the President highlighted the need to transition the Ministry of Justice of the Republic to fundamentally new methods of work, while taking into account existing norms of the Constitution.

In the field of human rights, the priorities for the future include the development of a National Strategy, improving activities of law enforcement bodies and institution of the legal profession, strengthening interethnic harmony, guaranteed protection of citizens inside and outside the country, achieving gender equality, ensuring the inviolability of private property.

The President noted that in order to achieve these goals, reforms will be aligned with international standards. Yet, we can see results in this area that gained recognition of the international community.

The confirmation for the aforementioned fact is as follows: positive decisions were taken on over 510 thousand out of more than 880 thousand appeals of citizens which were filed this year to the People's reception offices. Legislation is being improved. The laws "On personal data", "On protecting the victims, witnesses and other participants of a criminal proceeding" were adopted this year alone. The ILO's Forced Labor Convention and Labor Inspection Convention were ratified. This all reflects the firm and unwavering position in terms of combating forced labor.

In recent years, 8 decrees on granting pardon to persons who committed crimes were adopted; over 4 thousand persons were released from penal facilities.

On the eve of the Constitution Day, the President signed the decree that pardoned 92 prisoners who have sincerely repented of their criminal activity and returned to the path of correction. Now they can get back to normal life.

The closure of Jaslyk penal colony this year closed became a practical example of humanistic policy. A procedure of payment of pensions and providing social insurance to convicts has been put in practice for the first time. As a result, 709 pension-age convicts, who are serving their sentence in a penal colony settlement, receive their pension.

As a part of the humanitarian activities, the Government have successfully implemented two special missions “Mekhr-1” and “Mekhr-2”. As a result 261 citizens, mainly women and children, were returned back to Uzbekistan from the battlefields in the Middle East and Afghanistan. They were provided with necessary medical care and material assistance.

It was noted that the true manifestation of representative democracy is embedded in voting for a candidate or a program put forward by a political party. Upcoming elections will be held under the motto “New Uzbekistan – new elections”. The main distinction of this year’s elections lies, first of all, in efforts in improving electoral code. Thus, 21 laws were systematized and the unified Electoral Code was adopted for the first time in the history of Uzbekistan. The Code features 30 new democratic provisions.

6,936 districts and 10,306 polling stations have been established across the country to ensure free voting of our citizens in this year’s elections. 5 political parties are represented this year. People of Uzbekistan wish that persons equipped to tackle real life problems and possess deep knowledge and skills will lead the way in adopting laws, promote efficient reforms and be elected as members of parliament.

It is expected that observers from dozens of international organizations, the full-fledged mission of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as over 600 observers from over 40 countries of the world will participate at the elections.

To conclude his speech, the President noted that democratic reform agenda in Uzbekistan has become irreversible. Despite fast changing world, new challenges and threats, Uzbekistan will assertively continue to move forward relying on the wisdom, strong will and the potential of its nation. Country’s Constitution, in turn, is a reliable source of strength and the guidance on this way.

I thank you.