



UZBEKISTAN AND TURKMENISTAN WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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Annotation:

As a full-fledged member of the international community, the Republic of Uzbekistan has prioritized foreign policy and the development of bilateral and multilateral relations with countries around the world since the first days of its independence. The leadership of Uzbekistan has developed a strategy and principles of foreign policy and defined its priority directions. Accordingly, the Republic of Uzbekistan has designated the maintenance and development of equal cooperation with the countries of the Central Asian region as a key priority. Today, this direction is entering a new stage of influence.

Keywords: Foreign policy, Economic relations, Central Asia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Joint commission

The Republic of Uzbekistan has traditionally built strong friendly relations with many countries, both near and far, based on justice, equality, good neighborliness, and humanitarian principles, which are considered national and universal values. Independence has given Uzbekistan the opportunity to define its domestic and foreign policy independently. As a subject of international relations, it developed the foundation of its foreign policy based on universally recognized norms of international law. As the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, emphasized: “We will organize close cooperation with foreign countries, especially neighboring states... based on mutual trust and consideration of interests, in accordance with the requirements of today.”

The agreements signed between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Central Asian states and the documents signed during official visits of heads of state serve as a solid legal foundation for mutual cooperation. In particular, the relations between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, formed in the spirit of modern times during the independence period, have turned into strong cooperation based on mutual respect and friendship. Both countries have prioritized expanding cooperation in political, trade-economic, and cultural-humanitarian spheres and have strengthened this through legal agreements.

In developing economic ties between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, key documents include the “Agreement on Main Directions of Long-Term Trade and Economic Cooperation” signed on January 16, 1996, and the “Agreement on the Establishment of the Uzbek-Turkmen Joint Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific-Technical, and Cultural Cooperation” signed on November 27, 1996. As a result, in November 1996, the permanent Joint Commission was established (hereafter referred to as the Joint Commission). Today, this commission holds regular sessions to analyze the state of cooperation between the two

countries, review achievements, find ways to utilize untapped potential, and develop new directions of collaboration.

Areas of mutual interest emerging from these agreements include the development of trade-economic, scientific-technical, and cultural cooperation; active involvement of capital and technology; formation of financial-industrial groups, joint ventures, and cooperative production.

At the Joint Commission's session held in Tashkent on May 5, 2011, the necessity of expanding the trade nomenclature using goods and services produced in both countries was emphasized. This directly contributed to the development of mutually beneficial economic ties between companies and enterprises of both nations, and the emergence of new effective forms of cooperation. As part of the Commission's efforts, regular national exhibitions have been organized in Tashkent and Ashgabat. For example, in February 2009, the Turkmen National Exhibition was held in Tashkent, featuring over ten companies and organizations from Turkmenistan showcasing their products in sectors such as transport, communications, agriculture, food, energy, chemistry, and medicine.

Despite some stagnation in recent years, both countries possess significant natural resources and potential that have not been fully utilized. This has necessitated a renewed strategic approach. Under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's leadership, Uzbekistan's 2017–2021 Development Strategy identified five key areas, including raising cooperation with Central Asian countries to a new level. A notable step was the President's first official foreign visit to Turkmenistan in March 2017, which played a vital role in expanding economic relations and deepening regional cooperation.

In summary, acknowledging the effectiveness of the Joint Commission, its agenda, and the capacities of both sides, the following areas deserve special focus:

- Further expansion of interstate trade and economic relations;
- Development of agro-industrial cooperation between the two nations;
- Growth in the number of joint ventures and representative offices of national firms and companies.

This, in turn, will elevate all sectors of bilateral cooperation through the work of the Joint Commission. Undoubtedly, economic cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan plays an important role not only in improving the well-being of both nations but also in implementing future-oriented projects.

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