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## ウズベキスタン共和国シャフカト・ミルジヨエフ大統領の議会演説

尊敬する国会議員の皆さま！

親愛なるウズベク国民の皆さま！

尊敬する来賓の皆さま！

今日、我が祖国の営みにおいて、私たちはみな、最も重要な政治の動きに関わっています。

ウズベキスタン共和国の大統領が、このように議会に向けて演説をするのは初めてのことであります。

ご存知の通り、多くの先進国では、政治や社会・経済、民主主義の推進など最も重要な喫緊の課題について、国家元首が議会に対し、演説を行っています。

国の運営におけるこのような民主主義的行動は、今日、ウズベキスタンで実施されている改革に合致するもので、特に国民との対話を重視する中で必要とされており、我々の取り組みの効果をより高めるものであると考えます。

本日の会合には、上院、立法院の議員の他に、中継を結んで、区、市、州議会の地方議員や各地方の首長、経済界の代表らも参加しています。

本日の演説では、我が国が新しい発展段階へと突入した 2017 年の主な総括と 2018 年の社会・経済発展における優先分野についてお話したいと思います。

国のさらなる発展のための戦略的行動計画で本年予定されていた課題を遂行するため、国、そして社会において、すべての力が結集されました。

そのような動き中で重要な一步となったのは、国家プログラム「民衆との対話と人間の利益の年」で計画されていた対策の実施でした。

注目すべきは、我が国民がウズベキスタンで大々的に実施されている改革を大変よく支持してくれているということです。改革による最初の成果が国民の生活に現れており、国民の社会的積極性や明日への確信が高まっています。

私たちは、国の営みに関わるすべての決定を国民との直接的な対話や民意に基づいて下しています。「国民が国に尽くすのではなく、国が国民に尽くす」との指針が私たちの活動の根幹となっています。

国家機関の職員、何より政府の高官が執務室での仕事だけに留まることなく、現場へ出て、国民にとり最も深刻な問題の解決にあたっています。

そういう意味でもウズベキスタンの歴史において、2017 年は国民との直接的な対話システムが作られ、国民の切実な問題を効果的に解決する年となりました。

このようなシステムの基盤となっているのは、国民相談センターや大統領付属相談センターで、これらは国民からの問い合わせや相談に対応する特別な民主的機関となっています。

短期間にこれらの相談センターには国民から 150 万件以上の問い合わせが寄せられ、多くの人々の間に年々積み積もってきた問題が解決されました。これは、口だけではなく、行動によって、民主主義が実現されていることを示しています。

各地方のリーダーたちがそれぞれ、誤りや欠陥等を迅速に解決することに対する責任を強く感じており、これは一連のシステムにおける重要な結果となっています。

司法分野や検察並びにその他の内務関係機関のシステムは、社会的平等性を保つにあたり、最も重要な機能であり、国民の関心にも目を向けながら、それらの抜本的改革も行われています。

この件に関しては、憲法制定 25 周年の祝賀行事において詳しくお話ししましたので、ここで再び触れることは控えたいと思います。

本年は、外国籍のウズベキスタン在住者の内、1100 人以上がウズベキスタンの国籍を取得しました。これは我が国で人権と自由が保障されていることを示しています。

経済分野について言えば、2017 年は現代のニーズにあった効果的な改革という一歩を踏み出した年となりました。

法律や法令、政令などが次々と採択され、新しい経済の形成や経済のさらなる自由化、経済に係わる法的基盤の整備、生産分野の近代化と多角化など、あらゆる角度からよく練られた対策が実施されています。

我が国では短期間に 161 の大規模生産拠点が稼動を始めました。それによって、来年の製品の生産量は 1 兆 5000 億スム相当、増加すると見込まれます（110 円 - 約 8100 スム）。

例えば、タシケント熱電併給発電所では蒸気ガス設備が使われ始め、それによって今までの電力量に加えてさらに 25 億キロワットの電力が作られることとなります。

また、ナヴォイ熱電併給発電所やキジルクム砂漠のアブミンザ＝アマンタイ金鉱にある湿式冶金工場でも 2 台目の蒸気ガス設備の設置が進められています。

現在、アルマリク鉱石コンビナートにより、「ヨシリク - 1」と「ヨシリク - 2」の鉱山開発が始められています。また、サルドピンスク貯水池、中央フェルガナ貯水池、トゥパラング貯水池などの大型施設の建設も急ピッチで行われています。フェルガナとマルギランを結ぶ鉄道では、電化が進められています。

カンディムガス加工施設の稼動により、2018 年には 41 億立方メートルの天然ガスと 6 万 7000 トン以上のコンデンセート、10 万 6000 トンの硫黄が採取される予定です。ウズベキスタン経済を牽引しているムバレクガス加工工場では、来年、工場が全稼動で硫黄を精製し、60 億立方メートルの天然ガスが生産されます。

「ウザグロテフサノアトホールディング」では、来年、5000 台以上の最新トラクターや 1000 台以上の綿花摘取り機、2000 台以上のトレーラーが生産される予定です。

このような例は、ごく一部のものです。

一番大事なのは、経済政策において、非現実的な数字を追ったり、実現不可能な計画をあたかも実現できるかのように目指したりするなどの受け入れがたい方針を厳しく見直していくことです。

2017年に実施された取り組みにより、経済は5.5%という安定した成長を遂げ、輸出額は15%増加しました。貿易収支は8億5400万ドルの黒字となりました。

国の通貨スムの交換の自由化も始まり、法人も個人も商業銀行において制限なく外貨を買ったり、売ったりすることが可能となりました。このような自由化が始まって以来、外貨の売買の取扱量は1.5倍、額にして13億ドル増加しました。また、国の外貨準備額は、11億ドルに増加しました。

今年、ウズベキスタンでは12の自由経済特区と45の産業特区が作られ、地方の発展が促進されています。また、近い将来、新たに50の産業特区を設置するための準備が始められています。

新しい雇用創出は、私たちにとって、非常に重要な意味を持っており、これは今年一年を通して常に焦点となっていた問題です。2017年は、新しい生産拠点の建設や小ビジネス、民間ビジネスの発展、サービス分野の拡大などにより、33万6000の新しい雇用が創出されました。国民の就業率の安定は優先課題と定め、雇用や就業率に係わる数値を数だけでなく質の面でもアップさせていくことを重要視しています。

国の政策の極めて重要な分野の一つとして、社会分野の改革における取り組みも実施されています。

ご存知の通り、国民、特に国家公務員や地方公務員、生活に苦しむ家庭などにとり、住居の問題は長年深刻なものでありました。正直申しますと、私たちはこの問題にあまり注意を払ってきませんでした。国民からのニーズに応え、今年は優遇担保融資を活用し、手頃な住居の建設をしてきました。

町や村に規格住居やマンションが建てられ、その総居住面積は350万平米以上になります。今までに比べ、住居の建設は著しく伸び、例えば、2007年と比較して20倍、2010年と比較して3.5倍、2014年と比べて2倍となっています。

必要な設備がすべて揃っており、尚且つ国民にとって手頃な価格のマンションの建設が始められたのは、この25年間で初めてのことです。2017年に総面積80万平米以上のこのようなマンションが建てられ、引き渡されました。

国民に手頃な住居を提供することは今も変わらず重要な問題であることから、私たちは来年もこのようなマンション建設を引き続き行ってまいります。

なぜかと言えば、国民は明日でもなく遠い未来でもなく、まさに今、生活において良き変化を感じたいと考えているからです。やさしく、仕事熱心で寛大なウズベク国民はそれを求める権利を持っているからです。

アラル海周辺の環境改善についても具体的な対策を取っております。財務省の中にアラル海沿岸地域発展基金が設立され、2000億スム以上の資金が集められました。

この資金を使って、給水施設が改良され、カラカルパクスタン共和国やホレズム州の住民の生活環境が向上しています。それ以外にもこれらの地域では 3000 キロ以上の道路が修復されました。

今年、私たちは新しい教育施設の建設や既存の教育施設の改修にも力を入れてきました。12 の学校が建設、320 の学校が改修され、152 の学校で大々的な修繕が行われました。

小さいときから子どもたちを育成することは大変重要であることから、幼児教育省を設置しました。幼児教育の物質的・技術的基盤を固める必要があり、今後 3、4 年の間に私たちは我が国の全地域に数千もの新しい幼稚園を作り、そこで受けられる教育の質を新しいレベルへと引き上げなければなりません。

多くの保護者や教師、生徒、そしてその他多くの方からの提案を受け、11 年制の教育制度が再開されました。

各地域に必要な教員を確保するために、タシケント州にチルチク国立教育大学が設立されました。

また、15 の高等教育機関では通信教育部が開設され、カレッジを終えている 5000 人以上の教育者が高等教育を受けられることとなります。

教育制度におけるイノベーション及びクリエイティブなアプローチとして、ムハマド・ホレズミとミルゾ・ウルグベクの名を冠した精密科学の研究を専門とした特別な学校が設立されました。

高等教育システムのさらなる改善を目的とした取り組みも実施されており、2017 年から 2021 年までの高等教育システム総合発展プログラムが採択されました。

大学や分校などが増えたことによって、国内の高等教育機関は 81 となり、国内の大学が地方に設立した分校は 15、海外の大学の分校は 7 となりました。また、アルマリクにモスクワ鋼鉄合金大学の分校を、タシケントにアメリカのウェブスター大学の分校を設立する合意が結ばれました。

経済界からのニーズもあり、いくつかの高等教育機関では、通信教育部や夜間部が開設されています。

多くの科学研究機関・センターの活動を復興させるべく、ウズベキスタン科学アカデミーのシステム改善ならびに物質的・技術的基盤強化への方策が講じられています。

長い空白期間ののち、科学アカデミーの選挙が実施されました。国内外での権威を誇る多くの才気溢れる学者に対し、学術の高い称号が与えられました。今度は我々が科学アカデミーの有望なる研究、新たな科学開発の実践的結果を待つ番なのであります。

こうした我々の後継活動のすべては、ひとつの目的達成に繋がるものです。すなわち、ウズベキスタンが科学の分野において、その知的ポテンシャル、新時代の人材、高いテクノロジーなど、世界舞台での競争力を持つということでもあります。

親愛なる皆さま！

文化・人文分野の発展に関して述べさせていただきますと、まず強調したいのは、今年、文化・芸術・文学ならびにマスメディアの諸問題に関する 12 の重要文書が発効されたことです。

国内の生活における創作組合の役割と意義を向上させること、そしてその物質的・技術的基盤を強化させることを目的として、ウズベキスタン創作振興一般財団「イルホム」が創設され、文化芸術施設、有力企業ならびに銀行との共同による「友好クラブ」が設立されました。

さらに、タシケントの国立公園敷地内には、文学の小径、作家組合の新建物が作られ、カラカルパクスタンならびに各州には、わが国の卓越した作家・詩人の名を冠した創作学校が開設されました。それに加え、コーカンド市立劇場、ホレズム州立劇場、ジザク州立劇場の建て直しが行われ、ウズベキスタン芸術文化大学のフェルガナ分校が創設の運びとなりました。

私たちの精神生活において重要な出来事であるプロジェクトについて語るならば、次のことに関して殊に言及しなければならないでしょう。すなわちウズベキスタン・イスラム文明センター、イマーム・ブハリ&イマーム・テルミジ記念国際科学研究センター、イスラム・アカデミーといった、科学啓蒙活動機関の活動開始です。

これと同時に、私たちの偉大なる思想家を記念する複合施設に付属して、ハディース、ムスリム法、スーフィその他の方面を研究する学校が創設されました。

良く知られているように、古代の文化文明の十字路口に位置する私たちの国は、幾千もの学者、思想家、偉大なる詩人、神学者を育んできました。各地の科学や宗教・哲学的知識を含め、今なお残るかけがえのない遺産は、今日の人間性すべてに関わる心の財産なのであります。

現在、ウズベキスタンには 10 万冊を超える古代の肉筆が保存されています。残念ながらそれら興味深い書物の数々がまだ完全には研究されていません。それらは自らの研究者・読者を待ち続けています。

それら極めて貴重な書物の中に、現代が抱える問題の多くに対する回答を見つけることができます。とりわけ、今日も本質を失っていない深い思考や思想は、イスラムの人道的核心や真理を語り掛けてくるものであり、民族、信教、社会的地位にとらわれず全ての人々を幸福、慈悲、寛容へと導くものであります。

これと共に、はっきりと認めなければならないのは、我々はこの比類なき財産の後継者であるということです。我らの同胞、特に次代を担う人々、さらには国際社会にとっても、これら全てを知りつくし、研究するにはまだまだ長い年月がかかることでしょう。

私たちは有害なる流れに抗い、啓蒙を通じて宗教的無知と争う必要性について多くを語ってきました。それは無論、正しいことです。しかし、その啓蒙、その知識はどこに存在するのでしょうか。まず何よりも、私たちの偉大なる祖先によって残されたこれら書物の中に存在しないものなのでしょうか？

この分野における私たちの実践的行動のすべては、つまり、そのような高潔なる目標の達成を目指すものであり、我が国のみならず諸外国にも大きな関心と注意を喚起しています。

したがって、そのようなかけがえのない豊かさをもち、進歩的な知性と幾千もの敬虔なるウラマーを有する我々の社会、そしてこの分野において重要なイニシアチブを担う我々の国に、宗教的原理主義の支持者が現れることは、容認できないことなのであります。

尊敬する参会者の皆様！

2017年は体育・スポーツの分野においても、大きな業績が成されました。

若者たちによるスポーツの功績は、我々にとって喜ばしいものとなりました。次々と現れる新たなチャンピオン、チェスマスターなどがその名を轟かせました。今年はいくまで、ウズベキスタンのスポーツ選手はボクシング、柔道、テコンドー、ウェイトリフティング、フリースタイルレスリング、サンボなど様々な大会で高い成績を残しました。

2017年はウズベキスタンの伝統競技クラッシュの歴史において輝かしい1ページとなりました。去る2017年9月、トルクメニスタンで開かれたアジアオリンピック委員会総会において、アジア大会プログラムへの同競技の導入に関する決定がなされました。かくして来る2018年インドネシアで開催される第18回アジア競技大会には、ウズベキスタンの国技クラッシュも参加の運びとなったのです。

現在、私たちはウズベキスタン国家オリンピック委員会の活動完全化に取り組んでいます。オリンピックならびにその他の権威ある大会への準備は、国際基準を満たす新たな原則に基づいて成されることとなります。

本日、この壇上をお借りして、私たちのすべての若きスポーツ選手ならびにその指導者、トレーナーに対し、国家におけるスポーツ発展への尽力を感謝するとともに、彼らの新たな勝利を祈念するものであります。

尊敬する国民の皆様！

対外政策について言えば、私たちは、諸外国、何より隣国との友好関係、相互互惠関係の発展において、大きな成果を残すことができました。

今年一年間で21回に及ぶ国家元首レベルの訪問が実現し、60以上の国並びに国際機関のリーダーや関係者との会談が行われました。その結果、400以上の協定が締結され、総額600億ドルにのぼる貿易・投資契約が調印されました。

これらの文書の合意内容を実現していくために40のロードマップが作成され、海外のパートナーと共にロードマップを実行しています。

私たちは、「ウズベキスタンの対外政策で最も優先すべきは、中央アジアである」との方針を具現化しています。その結果、中央アジアには、全く新しい政治の雰囲気を作られ、相互信頼と善隣に基づいた相互連携が強まっています。

トルクメニスタン、キルギスとは戦略的協力関係が構築されています。カザフスタンとは戦略的パートナーシップのさらなる深化に係わるさまざまな重要な文書が調印され、20億ドルにのぼる経済協定が締結されています。タジキスタンとの協力も強化されており、タシケントとドゥシャンベを結ぶ直行便が運行されています。

キルギスとの国境に関する条約が調印され、これは中央アジアにおける安全と安定の確保にとり、大きな前進となりました。

隣国アフガニスタンとも相互互惠協力に関する重要な協定が複数締結され、新たな経済プロジェクトに係わる実務的取り組みが始められています。

ロシアや中国、韓国、トルコ、アメリカ、EU 諸国、イスラム諸国とも有効な協定や合意文書が結ばれています。

ウズベキスタンは、国連やイスラム協力機構、上海協力機構、独立国家共同体（CIS）などの国際機関とも新しいレベルでの協力を推進しています。

欧州復興開発銀行との協力も再開され、欧州投資銀行とのパートナーシップ関係も構築されました。世界銀行や国際通貨基金、アジア開発銀行、イスラム開発銀行、アジアインフラ投資銀行などの機関との相互協力は大きく前進しています。

国内で実施されているさまざまな改革によって、国際場裡におけるウズベキスタンへの関心は高まっており、国際社会におけるウズベキスタンの立場も強まっています。

もちろん、今年一年間で取り組んできたことをお話ししようと思えば、長くなってしまいますが、私たち皆がよく理解していることは、これはすべて、私たちが選択した困難ではあるけれども、唯一確かな道における第一歩に過ぎない、ということです。

この場を借りまして、国家プログラム「民衆との対話と人間の利益の年」の実施に積極的に係わってくださった皆様、政府機関、非政府機関の関係者の皆様、経済界の皆様、この高邁な事業にご貢献くださったすべての皆様に対し、心より感謝申し上げます。

尊敬する会合への参加者の皆様！

我が国に根付いた良き伝統に基づき、来る 2018 年をどのように名づけるかについて皆様とお話ししなければなりません。

この件に関しては、だいぶ検討をしました。今年一年間で国民相談センターや大統領府附属相談センター、国の機関などに寄せられた相談や手紙、現場で住民らから出された意見なども参考にし、世論の意見を学びました。

すべての提案やアドバイスを参考にした上で、来る 2018 年は「活発な企業活動とイノベーション構想とテクノロジーを支援する年」としたいと思います。

ここで積極的な企業活動とは何かについて、少しお話ししたいと思います。ビジネスの内容がイノベーション的アプローチ、最先端のアプローチ、高度な技術などによるものである時に私たちはそれを積極的企業活動としています。

また、競争力の強い製品を生産することができ、かつ、最も重要なこととして、新しい雇用を創り、自分や家族だけでなく、社会全体に利益をもたらすような人たちを「積極的な企業家」と呼んでいます。

私たちがまず取り組むべき課題は、企業家たちをあらゆる面から支援すること、特に高度で最先端の科学技術を用いた製品の生産を開始するために良好な環境を作ることです。

また、海外の一流企業や機関での研修を実施するなどして、スキルアップのためにさまざまな可能性を与え、そのような企業や機関との相互互惠協力を進めていかねばなりません。

今日、私たちは国や社会の営みに係わるすべての分野を抜本的に改善することを目指したイノベーションの発展の道へと方向転換しています。

これは当然のことです。なぜなら、今日、世界が大きく発展している中で勝ち残れるのは、新しい考えや構想、イノベーションに基づいていて行動している国だけであるからです。

未来は、イノベーションにあります。もし、私たちが偉大な未来を作っていこうとするのであれば、まず何よりイノベーション構想や革新的なアプローチによってそれを目指していかねばいけません。

それゆえに、イノベーション開発省を創設し、具体的な課題を課したのです。イノベーション開発省が経済分野だけでなく、ウズベク社会全体の活動においても重要なプロジェクトを実現していく上で推進力を発揮してくれることを期待したいと思います。

学術研究並びにイノベーション事業を推進すること、それに必要な資金を提供し、このような動きに参画する才能ある若者を全面的に支援することが2018年の課題の焦点になります。



The **Address** of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the parliament of the country – the Oliy Majlis

**Distinguished deputies and senators!**

**Dear fellow countrymen!**

**Dear guests!**

Today, we are all witnessing an important change and a significant event in the political life of our beloved Motherland.

For the first time, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan is delivering his **Address** to the parliament of the country – the Oliy Majlis.

You are well aware that many developed countries of the world have a practice when the head of state addresses the members of the national parliament on the major urgent political and socio-economic issues, as well as on democratic development of society.

I believe, such democratic form of state governance is indeed **in harmony** with large-scale reforms, which are now underway in Uzbekistan, primarily, with the principle of dialogue with the people, and will serve to further increase the efficiency of our work.

Now, allow me to present to you the Address on the outcomes of the major works carried out in 2017, which marked a new stage in our development and the priority areas of socio-economic development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2018.

In the first place, we should note that the entire strength and capabilities of our state and society have been mobilized during the year to fulfill the tasks and objectives provided for in the Strategy of Action on the further development of our country.

It will indeed be true to say that implementation of measures set out in the State Program of “The Year of Dialogue with the People and Human Interests” has become an important step in this regard.

We are adopting each and every decision related to country’s life in **consultation with the people, through direct dialogue**. The idea that “**It is not the people who should serve the state bodies, but the state bodies should serve the people**” is turning into a criterion of our activity in this regard.

The People’s Reception offices and the Virtual Reception Office of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which make up the core of this system, are justifying themselves in practice as a unique democratic institute for **consideration of citizens’ appeals**.

The fact that over 1.5 million citizens appealed to these reception offices in a short period of time and the fact that long-standing problems of a whole lot of people have been positively resolved demonstrate that the rule of the people is being introduced in Uzbekistan not in words but in practice.

Taking into consideration the interests of our people, big changes are also being carried out in judicial and legal system, which is the crucial institution in terms of ensuring social justice, the prosecutor’s office and the bodies of internal affairs.

Since this topic was covered in detail at the solemn ceremony dedicated to the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, I believe, there is no need to dwell on it today.

In 2017, we made initial steps in terms of implementing the efficient reforms in the **sphere of economy**, which meet the modern requirements and have a new essence and content.

A number of laws, decrees and resolutions, comprehensively thought-out programs have been adopted and are being consistently implemented in terms of shaping the economy on a completely new basis, further liberalizing and improving its legal framework, modernizing and diversifying production.

Most importantly, in economic policy of the country we have abandoned such **unacceptable method of work as chasing unreal figures and passing off infeasible nonsense as reality**. Practical efficiency, **human interests and once again human interests** have been defined as the prime object of reforms.

As a result of measures carried out on this basis, in 2017, the rates of sustainable economic growth made up 5.5 percent, exports increased by 15 percent. Surplus of foreign trade reached 854 million US dollars.

**We have started the free conversion of our national currency.** Legal and physical entities now can freely buy hard currency from commercial banks and sell without any limitations.

Exchange transactions increased by 1.5 times against the period of liberalization and averaged 1.3 billion US dollars.

At the same time, during the year, foreign exchange reserves of our state grew by 1.1 billion US dollars.

This year, 12 free economic and 45 industrial zones have been launched in the country and these organizational measures are allowing us to rapidly develop the regions of Uzbekistan. Practical works are underway to launch 50 new industrial zones soon.

The issue of **job creation**, which is of crucial importance to us, has been in the focus of our attention throughout the year. In 2017, over 336,000 new jobs were created by means of constructing new industrial enterprises, commissioning of service establishments, developing small business and private entrepreneurship.

Since we have defined employment as our priority task, it is natural that we need to pay special attention to increasing not only the number, but the quality of employment as well.

Implementation of programs adopted in terms of reforming the **social sphere**, which is an extremely important direction of state policy in Uzbekistan, is continuing gradually.

It is an open secret that **the problem of housing** has been a longstanding concern for our population, especially for state employees and low-income families. It is also true that we have been almost ignoring this acute social problem.

Special attention has been attached to the construction of new educational facilities and renovation of existing ones. Twelve secondary schools were built from scratch, 320 reconstructed, 152 overhauled. One hundred and seven pre-school educational facilities were reconstructed and newly constructed, 195 kindergartens were overhauled.

Taking into account an important place and significance of pre-school education system in the life of our society, which is the main element in upbringing our children, we have established **the Ministry of Pre-school Education**.

We pursue only one objective from all of this. That is to say, Uzbekistan must be competitive in the world in terms of science and education, intellectual potential, modern personnel and high technologies.

It is an open secret that our country which is the crossroad of ancient cultures and civilizations is also a birthplace of thousands of medieval scholars, great thinkers, poets, and holy persons.

Their invaluable heritage in exact sciences and religious studies is the spiritual wealth of the entire humanity.

Currently, over 100,000 manuscripts are stored in the book stocks of Uzbekistan. Unfortunately, these unique books have not been thoroughly studied and are still waiting for their researchers.

These unique works provide answers to numerous urgent problems of modernity. In particular, the profound ideas, which thoroughly explain the truly humanistic essence of the Islamic religion, which call upon all people to unite on the path of kindness, mercy, and harmony have not lost their value and significance.

At the same time, we should openly admit that while being the heirs of such a unique heritage and of such wealth, we have not done enough to thoroughly study it, promote it among our people, primarily our youth, and the world community.

We speak a lot about the need to fight religious ignorance and dangerous sects with enlightenment. This is certainly correct. But, where is enlightenment and enlightened knowledge – aren't they in these holy books left to us by our forefathers in the first place?

All of our practical efforts in this regard are aimed at this noble goal and draw profound interest and attention not only in the country and the Muslim world, but across the globe as well.

As a nation and a state which has such invaluable wealth, which is a birthplace of thousands of scholars and active intelligentsia, which is putting forth such significant initiatives in this area, tell me please if can put up with the fact that some fundamentalists, followers of religious sects originated from our country?

Dear compatriots!

Over the past period we have achieved significant results **in foreign policy** in terms of developing friendly and mutually beneficial relations with foreign states, primarily, the neighboring countries.

Twenty one top level visits were organized in 2017. Meetings with the heads and representatives of over 60 states and international organizations were held.

As a result, over 400 agreements were secured, trade and investment agreements worth almost 60 billion US dollars were signed.

In order to timely implement the adopted documents and agreements, 40 "Road maps" were developed and are being implemented jointly with our foreign partners.

We have started to put in practice the principle **"Central Asia is the main priority in foreign policy of Uzbekistan"**. As a result, completely new political climate has been shaped in our region, the ties are developing based on mutual trust and good neighborliness.

We have established strategic partnership with Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan. A number of important documents were signed with Kazakhstan in order to further intensify our strategic partnership. We signed economic agreements worth 2 billion US dollars. Our cooperation with Tajikistan is comprehensively strengthening. Flights between Tashkent and Dushanbe cities have been launched.

Signing of the Agreement on state borders with Kyrgyzstan has become a significant step in ensuring security and stability in Central Asia.

Important agreements were reached with the neighboring Afghanistan in terms of

mutually beneficial cooperation, the work has started on new economic projects.

In addition, we have reached efficient agreements with Russia, China, South Korea, Turkey, USA, states of the European Union, as well as Muslim countries.

Uzbekistan is continuing the ties of cooperation with such international structures as the UN, the OIC, the SCO, and the CIS on a new level.

We have restored cooperation with EBRD, established partnership with the European Investment Bank. Cooperation with the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is developing productively.

Positive transformations, which are taking place in our country are increasing the interest of the world community in Uzbekistan, serve to consolidating the country's prestige on the international arena.

Certainly, we can speak a lot about the works carried out by us during the year. However, I will tell the truth if I say that these are only primary steps on a long and difficult, yet the only right path chosen by us.

Taking this opportunity, I express my sincere gratitude to all state and non-state organizations, economic entities and companies, each and everyone who participated in the implementation of the State Program "The Year of Dialogue with the People and Human Interests" and contributed to this noble cause.

Dear participants of the meeting!

In accordance with a good tradition of our country, now we need to agree with you on how to name the forthcoming year 2018.

We have pondered a lot on this issue. We have taken into consideration numerous appeals and letters received to the People's Reception Offices, and the Virtual Reception Office of the President, to the state bodies during the year, as well as proposals put forward during the meetings on the ground, we have studied the public opinion.

Taking into account all proposals and recommendations, I propose to name the new year 2018 as the **Year of support of proactive entrepreneurship, innovative ideas and technologies in our country.**

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In this regard, we should briefly dwell on the concept of **proactive entrepreneurship**. Proactive entrepreneurship is the area of the economy which organized the business activity on the basis of innovative, i.e. modern approaches, advanced technologies and the methods of governance.

Under proactive entrepreneur, we understand business persons who are capable of producing competitive products, most importantly, creating new jobs and supporting not only their families but benefit the entire society.

Our first and foremost task must be to expand the ranks of such entrepreneurs, create favorable conditions for them to bring and introduce high technologies and latest equipment in the country.

If necessary, we must create all possibilities for them to develop their skills at leading foreign companies and organizations, establish mutually beneficial cooperation.

Today we are stepping **on the path of innovative development** aimed at reforming all spheres of state and social life.

Certainly, it is not for nothing. Who will win in this rapidly changing time? A state, which is based on new thoughts, new ideas, and innovation.

Innovation means future. If we to start building our great future today, we should start it on the basis of innovative ideas and innovative approach.

To this end, we have established the **Ministry of Innovative Development** and put specific tasks before it. We are confident that this Ministry will play the role of a driving force in implementing the most important projects not only in the economy, but in the life of the entire society.

Next year our attention will be focused on the development of scientific research and innovative activity, mobilizing the necessary funds, encouraging the participation of talented youth, creative ideas, as well research and development in this process.

## **I. Priority areas of improving the system of state and social building**

Distinguished people's deputies!

Today, the need to effectively address the existing problems in the life of society and consistently continue the large-scale reforms, require the creation of a completely new system in the sphere of state governance.

I believe the time has come **to draft and adopt the Law "On civil service"**

Along with other urgent issues, it is necessary to create the system of **remuneration of labor of civil servants and their decent social protection**, while providing for increasing the responsibility of office holders.

In the sphere of governance, in the first place, we must introduce the clear-cut criteria and regulations in terms of improving the activity of the bodies of executive power, personnel and reasonable use of resources.

**Second**, it is necessary to clearly define the functions and scope of authorities of the bodies of executive power

**Third**, it is necessary to reduce the administrative influence on sectors of the economy and extensively use the market mechanisms. That is to say, we need to limit the creation of state business structures, develop market mechanisms, and delegate certain functions of the state to the private sector.

**Fourth**, it is necessary to gradually abandon the centralized governance by improving methods and approaches that will promote closer cooperation between the bodies of representative power and executive authorities.

It is necessary to provide public services directly at lower levels, as well as to increase financial and other capabilities of local authorities. We need to optimize and simplify the procedures and introduce innovative forms of governance.

**Fifth**, we need to reform the institute of public service and introduce effective anti-corruption mechanisms.

Today, life itself requires the development of a professional, fast and effective system of civil service, we need to develop an effective system that opens broad opportunities for action-oriented cadres with innovative ideas committed to the country.

In order to fulfill the above-mentioned tasks, we must consistently implement the **Concept of Administrative Reforms** in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

As you are aware that in order to effectively combat corruption in our country, we adopted a specific law in this area.

On this basis, the state program, which includes specific targeted measures, is being consistently implemented.

As a result of these efforts, during 9 months of this year, corruption-related crimes decreased by **33 percent** compared to the last year.

We must see these results as an initial outcome of our long-term and continuous work in the fight against corruption, and we must carry out yet more resolute work along this path.

Dear friends!

I believe it is necessary to emphasize the place and role of the parliament, lawmakers and senators in improving the efficiency of our reforms.

At the meeting with the members of the Oliy Majlis on July 12, 2017, we approved a program of practical measures, stressing the need for the **parliament to become a real school of democracy, the initiator and the main reform implementer.**

But how have our people benefited from the implementation of this program? How did the MPs or senators help to ease the burden of our people and solve their problems in the spheres of health, ecology, public services, education or in any other area?

Unfortunately, our people don't see the vivid examples in this area neither in the press nor on TV. It's true. Unfortunately, the words that our MPs and senators should wake up, that this is the requirement of time went in vain. I repeat once again, there is no expected real result.

Out of 136 legislative initiatives put forward during the year, only 27 belonged to the MPs and they consisted of the amendments and additions to the currently effective laws, which needed to be made due to the adoption of Presidential decrees and resolutions. Doesn't it alone demonstrate the lack of efficiency of the parliament?

Does the President alone have to adopt decrees and resolutions to implement the reforms?

When the parliament will draft a decision or a law aimed at drastically improving not a lot but at least one sphere? When will this happen?

Our people are waiting for your response, distinguished people's deputies, on this issue. The time when deputies or senators could be on their after being elected have long passed. Once again I repeat, you must wake up.

Unfortunately, in many cases, the activity of our parliament is limited to official meetings only. Why are the identified problems or issues raised by voters not resolved by the adoption of appropriate laws or by resolutely raising this issue with the executive branch? Tell me who needs inefficient control and useless meetings?

It was suggested that the parliament needs to guide the work in public healthcare, preventing crimes and offences, as well as creating an atmosphere of efficiency and self-criticism in local councils.

However, the role of the parliament and MPs in these areas is still inadequate.

Today, we can say that the system of public healthcare doesn't meet the requirements and adequately serves the people in any of the regions.

The Legislative Chamber (**N. Ismailov**) would be better focus on resolving these critical issues on the ground.

It would be excellent to establish a separate **Healthcare Committee** in the Legislative Chamber whose members would mainly work in the regions.

When we look at the reports, it seems that there are positive changes in local councils, but they are only reflected in figures. We need results, not numbers.

The activity of local councils can be assessed positively only when the situation in the regions changes positively, budget is fully implemented, crime rates fall, new jobs are created, and most importantly, the living standards of our people improve.

Unfortunately, no district was able to properly organize the activity of the Council of People's Deputies.

The leadership of the Senate (**N. Yuldashev**) would better to critically review the activity of the upper house in this regard, taking into account the views of the population and take the necessary measures to radically change the activity of representative bodies.

In addition, the efforts on prevention of offences and improvement of the effectiveness of the fight against crime should not be weakened.

The most important function of our parliament - lawmaking is not without shortcomings.

We should openly admit that in most cases, adoption of inefficient, contradicting laws and by-laws in fact, create many problems.

Tell me please who needs inefficient working groups and "dead" laws that do not influence the law enforcement practice and don't have the enforcement mechanisms?

In order to eliminate such negative situations, we need to develop and implement the **Concept of improving the lawmaking and development of regulatory documents.**

From now on, we will critically revise the practice of lawmaking in the framework of implementation of various programs.

None of us should forget one truth: **people must be the only source and author of the law.**

There is a need to broadly introduce the procedure for getting the opinions and suggestions on each draft law from citizens and local councils of people's deputies.

During the adoption of the law, we must effectively use the system of its comprehensive discussion among the population.

The leadership of the Oliy Majlis should involve the general public in the discussion of laws, and to this end it is necessary to introduce modern information and communication technologies, including the creation of special "platforms" on the Internet.

In this regard, it is advisable to create a **special web page** titled "**My Opinion**" on the Internet so that our citizens can express their opinion on important state and social issues.

In particular, as an advanced mechanism of democracy, we need to introduce a **collective electronic appeal.** That is to say that the law will provide for consideration of the initiatives put forward by a group of citizens by the Oliy Majlis or the Council of People's Deputies.

Recently, we established the Institute of Legislative Problems and Parliamentary Studies under the Oliy Majlis.

This institution should be a scientific center, which will deeply analyze and sort out various proposals put received by the Oliy Majlis.

Another important issue is the need to further strengthen the role of the chambers of parliament and political parties in developing effective measures for studying the situation in all areas and solving existing problems.

In this process, we must also abandon the chase of numbers. Instead of resolving hundreds of problems on paper alone solve few of them in practice and people will be pleased with you.

Most importantly, people need to be aware of the changes occurring life, and they must feel that they have a real representative in the system of state governance. Otherwise all our work will be in vain.

**Ensuring competition between parties,** creating equal conditions for all political actors is a necessary prerequisite for strengthening the role of the parliament.

It is a well-known fact that the Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan established in 2008, has turned into a real political force. However, we should admit that the inclusion of the Movement's members in the lower house of the parliament basis a quota to some extent affects its pro-activeness and initiatives.

I believe the time has come to create equal conditions for all political forces and **abandon the practice of allocation of seats for the representatives of the Ecological Movement** in the lower house of parliament. This change will improve true competition in the political arena and serve the Ecological Movement to become a separate political force.

In this regard, I would also like to emphasize on the electoral legislation, which has an important significance in our political life. Unfortunately, six laws and a number of by-laws adopted in this area haven't still been integrated into a single consolidated document.

Therefore, it is necessary to develop and adopt a **single Electoral Code**, which would meet international norms and standards.

In addition, it is necessary to begin the development of the **program of events on preparing for elections**, which will be held in 2019 to the representative bodies of power. Particular attention should be paid to the introduction of new progressive practices that will ensure more transparent political process.

Dear friends!

Another important problem, which we are facing today, is the drastic improvement of the quality of public services and creation of favorable conditions for the population by expanding their scope.

To this end we have created a new structure - **the Public Services Agency** under the Ministry of Justice, which will coordinate and monitor the services provided by all government agencies.

**From now on, the Public Service Centers of the Agency, which will be functioning under the People's Reception Offices** will be an agency which will provide fast and high-quality services not only to entrepreneurs, but the entire nation.

**Planning and improving the efficiency of state bodies** remains an urgent issue.

Today, there is no clear criterion which would allow to objectively assess the activity of an organization in the past period. For example, today I still do not know on what criteria the activities of the Ministry of Economy or other ministries is assessed.

Therefore, ministries and departments, mayor's offices of all levels in defining the forecast indicators should determine the exact number and quality indicators expected in their activity.

It is necessary to revise the structure and functions of state bodies. Most importantly, in order not to make errors and adopt well-thought decision, **a positive conclusion must be obtained from the Commission for the Implementation of the Concept of Administrative Reforms.**

It is extremely important that the **bodies of executive power act in harmony** for the effective implementation of measures taken in our country.

Unfortunately, today the lack of clear level of responsibility and the mechanisms of authority hinders our work.

In this regard, it is necessary to introduce a system of effective decision-making in public state governance on the basis of transparency.

It is desirable to revise **the principles and mechanisms of cooperation between state bodies and the Cabinet of Ministers.** Each ministry must ensure the implementation of state policy in the field of its activity and bear full responsibility for the final result.

The agencies, committees, inspections and centers that operate on an equal basis with the ministries and directly interact with the government and the parliament, must be subordinated to the relevant ministries.

Taking this into account, it is necessary to **critically revise and optimize the role and functions of the government.**

These changes will allow to drastically reduce the number of government agencies that almost duplicate each other in state and governance and economic affairs.

One of the most difficult issues for us is the **over centralization of functions and powers of the state.**

For example, at present there are 64 types of licenses, of which 21 are issued by the Cabinet of Ministers and 40 by the central authorities. Three of these licenses refer to the power of regional administrations, and only one to district mayor's office.

This can also be witnessed in the formalization of permitting documents as well.

Out of **220** documents related to the issuance of permits, only **11** maybe obtained at city or district level. To obtain the remaining **209** it is necessary to apply to the national-level and regional authorities. Do you think this is right?

For example, in order to obtain a license to open a private kindergarten in Shavat district, an entrepreneur is forced to travel a thousand kilometers and come to Tashkent and wait 3-4 months for the result.

Similar situation can be witnessed in selection and appointment of personnel, allocation of credit and financial resources, and approval of many important decisions at the local level.

What does this mean if local authorities do not have the authority to solve ordinary problems?

All of this negatively affects the independent activity of local structures in resolving social and economic problems in the regions.

It is necessary to delegate many powers from the central government to territorial bodies and **get rid of excessive centralized state administration.**

To this end, the position of deputy mayors for the attraction of investment was introduced on the ground - district, city and regional administrations.

At the same time, it was decided to increase the responsibility of the territorial bodies of tax, financial and economic authorities for the formation of budgetary resources and creation of reserve resources. The powers of local authorities in the sphere of budget reforms were expanded.

From now on, each head of the region should take advantage of the provided opportunities and take a full responsibility for the results.

One of the urgent problems in the near future is the **delegation of powers for the selection and appointment of managers responsible for socio-economic issues in the regions to district and city mayors.**

From now on, the heads of medical association, department of public education, economy, financial departments, tax inspectorate and other bodies will be appointed and dismissed by district mayors.

The powers to select, appoint and dismiss the employees in the regional administrations and the city of Tashkent will be revised.

At the same time, by granting local heads such broad powers and independence, we must radically increase their responsibility for the final outcome.

Another important task is the **division of powers of mayors as the head of executive and representative power.**

In the near future, it is necessary to create a unified platform on the Internet for **all public procurement and sale of state property.** This will reduce budget expenditures, and allow to effectively manage state property and save large financial resources.

Dear compatriots!

It should be noted that non-governmental non-profit organizations play a unique role in the reforms aimed at creating free civil society, protecting human rights and freedoms.

Currently, there are **over 9,000** non-governmental non-profit organizations in the country, as well as **29** branches and representative offices of international and foreign non-governmental organizations.

In 2017, the presidential Decrees and Decisions were adopted in terms of improving the activity and supporting such non-governmental organizations as the “Nuroni” Foundation, the Youth Alliance, the Council of Farmers and Household Plot Owners of Uzbekistan, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Republican Council for the coordination of the activity of self-governing bodies.

However, despite these significant efforts, the participation of these organizations in the systemic study and resolving the population's problems, especially in supporting the vulnerable women, preventing of crime and offences among the youth and women, providing them with jobs is not noticeable. They are only engaged in holding formal meetings.

We believe that non-governmental and non-profit organizations will be able to make a turn in their work, drawing conclusions from today's critical opinions.

In order to establish an effective dialogue with these social structures I believe it is expedient to set up **an Advisory council for the development of civil society** under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

I would like to dwell on another important issue in this area. So far, there are no specific legal mechanisms for effective public control over government bodies.

This impedes an impartial assessment of the activities of state structures and officials by non-governmental non-profit organizations.

Therefore, in order to implement effective and practical mechanisms of social control over public and state administration, it is necessary to adopt the **Law on "Public Control"**. In this regard, I propose to create **public councils** at all government agencies.

These public councils should serve as a bridge that will ensure the openness of state bodies and will directly link them with the population.

The mass media are an important and influential factor in strengthening democratic principles in our society.

In this regard, we need to form a truly professional, modern journalism, focus on financial support of non-state media, information and analytical websites and create a separate state fund to this end.

Today, there are more than 1500 media outlets in our country. They vary depending on the form of ownership, specialization and forms of broadcasting. Obviously, they all need highly qualified staff.

Unfortunately, there is no basic institution of higher learning that could solve this large-scale task in the country.

In this regard, I believe it is necessary to establish a University of Journalism and Mass Communication.

## **II. Priority areas for ensuring the rule of law and further reforming judicial and legal system**

Dear deputies and senators!

I never become tired of repeating one idea: our prime goal must be to ensure justice in our life, which our people cherish the most.

Over the past year, the large-scale work were started to ensure the true independence of the judiciary. In particular, **the Supreme Council of Judges** was established, in order to further improve the structure of judges, select and appoint candidates for positions of judges who are not subject to any branch of power.

The Council established effective **public control** over the selection and appointment of candidates for judges.

We must continue reforms in this area. To this end, I consider it necessary to create a **Commission for the support of independence of the judiciary** under the Oliy Majlis.

The commission must consider appeals received from people, summarize the issues raised during dialogue and communication with people, analyze the situation through parliamentary inquiry and solve problems in coordination with the Supreme Court and the Supreme Council of Judges.

In order to ensure the true independence of the judiciary, first of all, judges should be protected from factors affecting access to justice. It is extremely important to **identify cases of interference in the activity of the court, toughen liability and ensure that punishment is inevitable**.

We will consistently continue to work on the implementation of the Habeas Corpus Institute and strengthening judicial control over investigation. Proceeding from this, **it is necessary to transfer to the court the right to obtain permission to search and tap the phone conversations of suspects**.

We will pay special attention to the elimination of certain deeds from the category of offences and their liberalization, changing the criminal punishment from humanistic point of view.

To this end, we need to adopt and implement the **Concept of improvement of criminal and criminal-procedural legislation for 2018-2021**.

Based on such eternal values of our people as forgiveness and tolerance, we need to revise **the terms of bringing to criminal liability**.

We also need to establish the **Academy of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan**, which will train highly qualified judges.

As I noted at the meeting on the occasion of the Constitution Day, from now on we will not allow for torture, psychological and physical pressure and other forms of inhuman violence against persons arrested and convicted in Uzbekistan.

An officer who committed such acts or any person who fulfilled someone's «order» would inevitably be brought to liability irrespective of who he/she is.

In view of the creation of additional mechanisms to ensure the rights of prisoners, **further improvement of criminal justice legislation** is of particular importance.

Within the framework of critical examination and drastic improvement of the system of penal institutions, we intend to adopt a Program of relevant activities for 2018-2022.

In order to prevent the human rights violations, all temporary and pre-trial detention facilities and penal institutions will be equipped with video surveillance equipment.

**Starting from next year, we will be providing traffic police and post-patrol police with video cameras, which will allow them to tape their conversations, especially with citizens.** This system will help prevent possible extortion and abuse of office.

At present, the old disposition of road checkpoints in the regions restrict the freedom of movement and impact the development of trade and economic relations, internal and external tourism.

Just think, today there are over 60 such posts across the country. And imagine that in order to come from Khorezm to Tashkent one needs to pass 17 checkpoints. And a person travelling from the Fergana Valley will have to pass eight of such checkpoints.

In this regard, it is necessary to **remove all road patrol checkpoints in the regions** and drastically reduce the number of fixed checkpoints.

It is necessary to emphasize that, since we are building a democratic state, we need to **improve the training of** well-educated, highly qualified, self-sacrificing professional lawyers who would meet international standards.

### **III. Priority directions of economic development and liberalization**

Dear friends!

We all understand that any reform and change can not be achieved without sustainable economies.

We have begun extensive work on this subject over the past year.

However, we still have many tasks to strengthen our national economy and bring our country to the circle of developed countries.

Today, the number of developing countries is growing due to the introduction of innovative models of development, advanced ideas, export of know-how and smart technologies in the world.

Unfortunately, the work done in this direction in our country is not satisfactory. I think you will agree with it.

According to the International Monetary Fund, Uzbekistan ranks 134<sup>th</sup> in the world ranking of gross domestic product per capita.

However, Uzbekistan is a country rich in natural resources with a huge economic potential. There are large reserves of natural resources such as gold, silver, copper, uranium, oil, natural gas and coal.

In general, all the elements in Mendeleev's chemical table can be found in our country.

Our fertile soil, sunny comfortable climate of four seasons and unique nature, where else can you find it?

The thing is to use this priceless treasure wisely and effectively in the interests of our people. But we must admit we are lagging behind in this.

For example, the volume of gas production in our country in 2017 amounted to 56.5 billion cubic meters. However, the sphere has not been modernized for many years. That's why the loss is very big - 20-23%. Of course, all of us should think and worry of wasting much of this wealth.

God did not give such a blessing to everyone. It is important to value and preserve it.

Economy means calculating. In each case careful calculation should be given priority. Otherwise our whole work will be in vain.

For example, we need to produce 66 billion cubic meters of gas in 2018. About 17 billion cubic meters of gas will be delivered to "Uzbekenergo" company. It generates 56 billion kilowatt of electricity. Unfortunately, we have outdated transmission lines. As a result, 15-20% of electricity is lost in the network without reaching the consumer.

Or another example, enterprises affiliated to "Uzkimyosanoat" company consume about 10 billion cubic meters of natural gas a year.

On this basis mineral fertilizers are produced and delivered to our farmers. Due to untimely collection of funds from farms, "Uzkimyosanoat" company has debts for natural gas of 890 billion as of December 1, 2017.

Under the market conditions both the supplier and the consumer should fully comply with their contractual obligations. Otherwise, we will be stuck in one place and in continuous trouble.

A serious problem is the outdated management system, untimely introduction of effective mechanisms to support innovative ideas.

In addition, technological backwardness, the lack of resource and energy-saving technologies and alternative energy sources also hamper economic development.

Worst of all, serious mistakes made in the definition and implementation of promising large-scale projects, use of foreign loans for inefficient work hinders the development of the economy.

For example, many experts and specialists recognize that many loans taken in the country for 25 years did not yield economic benefits. For example the Ustyurt Gas Chemical Complex built in Karakalpakstan does not provide the expected economic benefits. Some "clever individuals" from the Ministry of Finance used to shout to the whole world that this is the best project in the world. But where is the result?

Such a pity situation can be seen in social programs related to the most acute needs of our people. For example over the past 10 years more than \$618 million of foreign loans were attracted within the framework of 17 projects to provide drinking water to the population.

If such amount of currency were spent for achieving the effective, concrete results in improvement of live standards of our people, today we naturally would thank to the leaders of the economic complex who have initiated this work. Yet, unfortunately, this has not happened. Many of the started projects have not been completed. Drinking water is still a sweet dream for many people. Who will answer for their hope, because they are not justified?

First of all, we need to create an effective system attraction of foreign loans and investment, learn how to use each loan. In this issue it is time to measure seven times and cut once and think about the consequences.

In this context, it is crucial to prepare a innovation program for state renovation, to prepare a new generation of cadres who effectively use innovations and investments and prepare a new class of investors.

**To do this Uzbekistan needs a strong national idea and national program on technological development and modernization of the domestic market.**

This program should enable Uzbekistan to faster join the ranks of the world's developed countries.

Speaking of this, we recall the words of a prominent statesman and the politician Winston Churchill. See what he wrote: **“Some regard private enterprise as if it were a predatory tiger to be shot. Others look upon it as a cow that they can milk. Only a handful see it for what it really is--the strong horse that pulls the whole cart”**.

I think there is no need to comment how true these statements are.

The requirement of a market economy is that resources and opportunities must be the equal for all. Nobody has the right to a monopoly.

From this point of view, it is injustice that imports of products important for the needs of the population are concentrated in the hands of some groups and also that this has become a source of tangible income for them.

**Granting privileges to some enterprises, we ourselves limit the environment of free competition, we have a negative impact on price stability.**

Now **we will abandon this practice. In this respect, equal conditions for all will be created.** Privileges will be granted not to certain enterprises, but to encourage special types of production and services. Complete monopolization of the main spheres of activity, under the guise of privileges, will be absolutely unacceptable.

In order to create an equal and fair competitive environment in a market economy, a draft of the Decree **"On Measures for Further Effective Provision of Food Security of the Country"** was developed and presented to the discussion of general public.

Most are well aware: the complexity of customs procedures is one of the main obstacles to entrepreneurship.

Of course, it's disappointing that, according to the World Bank report, Uzbekistan ranks 175<sup>th</sup> among 190 countries in processing export-import documentation.

For example, if you need 1 hour for customs clearance in Belgium, then it takes a whole month in our country.

Imported goods are subject to a separate inspection in each customs regime. We have several such customs regime. Why should one cargo be inspected several times on the territory of our country? Who is interested in this? After all, every test requires cost! Our financial capabilities are unlimited, or what?

In addition, depending on the type, it is not allowed to export goods from the bonded warehouse without compliance, hygienic or veterinary certificate. Are not each our customs warehouse equipped with express laboratories? How open and transparent are these processes, why are the concerned agencies not worried about this?

In all developed countries, the customs inspection is carried out through a hazard warning system. This saves the resources of the government and the time of entrepreneurs. But we have not yet implemented this system.

Starting next year, we will introduce a warning system for customs clearance for business entities, in particular, depending on how honest entrepreneurs are, they will pass through the "green" and "red" corridors.

At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen counteraction to illegal inspections, unreasonable interference in the activities of private business. For this, it is necessary to radically revise the system of inspections of the activities of business entities.

The work of the Republican Council for Coordinating the Activities of Regulatory Bodies does not meet the requirements of the time. We must openly admit this.

Think about it, and the working body of this council, as well as the controlling body conducting the largest number of inspections, is the tax authority itself. How can this be understood if it itself issues a permit for verification and checks itself?

In this connection, I consider it expedient **to transfer the issuance of permits for verification to a special electronic information system and to control it to the General Prosecutor's Office.**

What if, in connection with the fact that we declared 2018 as "**The Year of Support of Active Business, Innovative Ideas and Technologies**", we **will halt for two years the verification of the financial and economic activities** of all business entities?

It is required that, under the leadership of the Prosecutor General, the heads of supervisory bodies every month meet with exemplary and active business entities, listen to the problems that concern them, take measures to identify and eliminate the shortcomings that impede their legitimate activities.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry should not sit idle in the matter of reliable protection of the rights of entrepreneurs. At the same time, instead of talking about shortcomings committed by state bodies or officials, the Chamber needs to critically discuss offenses, in particular, crimes committed by entrepreneurs.

The community of entrepreneurs must be uncompromising towards unscrupulous entrepreneurs. It is necessary to create a system in which, first of all, not the state, but the entrepreneurs themselves show their attitude towards them and ensure goodwill in this environment.

Another important issue is the cardinal transformation of the activities of the Center for Coordination and Development of the Securities Market for the further development of the stock market and the stock exchange in our country.

We will continue to work on transferring free objects of state property to the private sector on the basis of joint partnership.

It is necessary to create **a unified procedure for the allocation of land plots, including for entrepreneurs**, through electronic auctions and auctions on the Internet. To this end, starting in 2018, **an electronic system for the sale of state assets through electronic trading platforms will be created.**

A strong and stable banking and financial system is of great importance in the development of the economy. We can not completely get rid of the "shadow economy" without increasing the confidence of the population and business entities in the banking system.

In the implementation of tasks to develop the banking system in 2018, the main attention should be paid to ensuring efficient and mutually beneficial cooperation between banks and business entities.

Despite the hesitations and "advice" of some "experts" who opposed the reform of the foreign exchange market, we started the process of currency liberalization on the basis of international standards in a short time. But we are well aware that this is only the beginning of reforms in the monetary policy of our country.

Currency policy should fully meet the interests of business and economic development, give a positive impetus to investment activity.

In 2018, we will abandon tough measures in the conduct of tax policy. Since budgetary sustainability is important like air and water for the smooth functioning of the public system during the reform period.

We need to do a lot to improve the tax system to make our country attractive for investors who intend to implement large investment projects in Uzbekistan. It is necessary **to reduce and simplify the tax burden** for all categories of business, thereby **expanding the production and tax base.**

The newly created small and medium-sized businesses that build facilities for their needs should be given the right to defer a single tax payment within a certain period of time. It is also necessary to encourage the transition of small businesses to pay value added tax.

At the same time, it is necessary **to move to a policy of stimulating rapidly developing and growing enterprises.**

I propose to abandon individual tax exemption and move to the practice of applying them only for certain sectors of the economy.

Most importantly, from the point of view of investors, the tax system should be clear and understandable for a long time.

Therefore, it is necessary to apply a carefully thought-out, long-term policy in the tax system.

We need **to revise the country's budget system, ensure that budget revenues and expenditures are open and transparent for our people.**

Do you know what our biggest problem is?

We do not have an elaborate, long-term unified concept for the development of investment programs.

During each state visit, we conclude agreements worth several billion dollars to attract foreign investments.

However, the implementation of these agreements is very slow. This is because there is no well-functioning system in this area.

In current investment programs there is no information on any particular project. When developing programs, the Ministry of Economy and local authorities are chasing only numbers.

They include in the program even those projects that do not bring economic benefits, have no prospects and sources of funding, unnecessarily overstate the cost of projects, in short, they are engaged in fraud.

It's time to get rid of this unpleasant practice. We decided to eliminate these cases and attract investments in the real sector of the economy, introduce a completely new mechanism for project development.

The practice of accepting investment projects, developed in a reckless manner and for the sake of diverting the eyes, is completely discontinued. From this moment, the concepts of long-term development will be developed.

As a first step in this direction, the **State Development Programs of the Republic of Uzbekistan** have been adopted and a **financing fund** for these programs was established.

One of our most important tasks in the development of the economy is to mobilize the population's funds as investments, to strengthen the sense of entrepreneurship in people.

To this end, I propose to open an **"Investment Portal"** on the Internet that will provide local and foreign investors with the necessary statistical data, provide information on the conditions of doing business.

Based on foreign experience, it is necessary to organize free 24-hour mobile communication services for all investors. It is also necessary to think about creating a system of benefits for foreign investors that encourages them to reinvest, rather than export their capital.

It is important to intensify the work of the heads of city administrations, government agencies and organizations to attract investment, to cooperate with foreign investors, to create new types of production and to increase employment.

Beginning next year, the results of the rating will be announced **to identify the conditions created on the ground for foreign investors**, and the activities of regional leaders will be assessed by these standards.

As you know, today there are our embassies in **33** countries of the world. But does the Ministry of Foreign Affairs make full use of its opportunities to promote an increase in the investment attractiveness of our country, to attract foreign investment? Is the activity of the embassy's councilors on trade and economic issues satisfactory?

Unfortunately, the issues of economy and investments have become secondary for our ambassadors. They are only concerned with "politics." The embassies have a shortage of specialists in economy, finance and investment.

Therefore, it is necessary to introduce a separate system for studying the knowledge and skills of each appointing embassy employee in the sphere of economy.

Dear friends!

It is important to emphasize the remaining vast untapped potential and resources **in the foreign economic sphere**.

In this regard, we will continue to expand trade-economic relations with Central Asian states and major partners – China, Russia, South Korea, United States, Turkey and European Union member-states.

In the forthcoming year we need to pay special attention to consistent development of reliable transport and transit corridors that will ensure access of Uzbekistan's foreign trade goods to main world and regional markets.

Today, our main goods are transported via transit routes of Kazakhstan, especially, most of the cargo cross through the “Saryagash” station, and we hardly can affirm that this route fully meets our demands.

While importing goods to the territory of Uzbekistan through this station, lack of electric locomotives, modern terminals, railway traffic congestion result in long-term cargo delays. In its turn, this has a negative impact on economy of our country.

For that reason we should diversify logistic routes, hold practical negotiations with our neighbours in this regard.

It is necessary to increase the potential of our country in the field of transport and communication infrastructure within the framework of the **“One Belt, One Road”** project initiated by China.

We should earnestly consider the possibilities of obtaining preferences in exporting our main goods through the territories of transit states, particularly, Turkmenistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Furthermore, in order to support national carriers and to create additional opportunities for entities of entrepreneurship, we must establish **“National Logistics Portal”**.

In the forthcoming year we will restart negotiations on accession to the World Trade Organization. In order to further encourage export, it is necessary to adjust respective technical regulations system to international standards. One of our core objectives is to deliver quality and certified products to foreign markets under the **“Uzbek brand”**.

Today one of perspective sectors, which generate high revenues to national economy is tourism.

Uzbekistan is considered a state, which possess vast potential in the sphere of tourism.

There are more than 7 thousand 300 cultural heritage sites, significant number of them is inscribed on the UNESCO's World Heritage List.

We should pay special attention to development of pilgrimage tourism, ecological, educational, ethnographic, gastronomic tourism and other directions of tourism by means of attracting of world brands into the sphere.

In this connection, we should take into consideration that fostering public-private partnerships will expand potential in development of this sphere.

It is necessary **to develop and intensify “Small Hajj” programme, which foresees pilgrimage to holy shrines and monuments** in the cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, Tashkent.

Along with this, it is essential to untap wide opportunities in the sphere of internal tourism as well.

Deputy Prime-Minister Mr.S.Kholmuradov and Chairperson of the State Committee on Tourism Development Mr.A.Abdukhakimov must elaborate and submit respective documents to address these issues within a week.

Dear participants of the meeting!

With your permission, I would like to dwell attention on most important tasks in the leading sector of our economy – agriculture.

We discussed it in detail during the meeting on the occasion of the Day of workers of agriculture, held on 9 December.

I will not repeat the voiced ideas and think it is necessary to focus our attention on the following important issues.

It is well-known that today more than 51 percent of the country's population lives in rural areas. However, agricultural products comprise not more than 17 percent of the Gross Domestic Product.

The volume of processing of agricultural products doesn't even reach 10 percent. Whereas, the same indicator amongst developed countries accounts for more than 50 percent.

In this connection, we should elaborate a **comprehensive program on further reforming agriculture.**

Particularly, special attention should be paid to ensuring food security, **introduction of strict control against production of genetically modified products.**

Indeed, the increasing volumes of imported fruits and vegetables into markets of our country during recent years should warn us.

In this regard, above all we should revive disappearing ancient sorts of products, establish efficient and effective selection work, ensure wide introduction of scientific achievements and innovations in agriculture.

It is known that textile industry of our country has a capacity to process up to 1 million 400 thousand tons of cotton fiber. It fully meets demands of country's manufacturers of finished products.

However, there is a number of problems in management of cotton processing industry. This, in its turn, results in decreasing profitability of cotton production and processing.

With that in view, in order to address challenges in this sphere, and further encourage local producers, we adopted a separate decree.

To this day, raw cotton was sold to our textile factories through "Uzpakhtasanoat" joint-stock company. According to the decree, from now on, textile factories have opportunity to purchase raw cotton directly from farmers under direct contracts.

We started a pilot programme on production of raw cotton, formation of prices and sales based on market requirements within the framework of establishing cotton-textile clusters in Navoiy, Bukhara and Syrdarya regions.

Today it is an imperative that we apply such best practices across our country in the future.

What concerns the stockbreeding sphere, we should create respective favourable conditions in order to increase the number of cattle and poultry, and to ensure quality and productivity.

There is a necessity to establish specialized livestock complexes, high-tech poultry farms, as well as greenhouses in each district in the near future.

At present, we export fruit and vegetable products worth 1.5-2 billion USD. However, in this sphere there is an opportunity to export products worth 10-15 billion dollars a year.

"UzAgroExport" joint-stock company, commodity exchanges, agrofirms and wholesalers should play a greater role in the production and export of products.

Effective realization of agricultural products is a very important issue. To this end, it is necessary to create **a single database on the volume and quantity of products grown on farms.**

Dear people's deputies!

I would like to briefly dwell on accelerated economic development of the regions.

I believe it is reasonable to expand powers, capabilities and responsibility of local authorities.

At present, there are 9 districts in the country, where there is no enterprise with foreign investment. Direct investments are mainly concentrated in Tashkent city, Tashkent and Samarkand regions as well as the Fergana valley.

In the regions, it is necessary to fully implement projects of modern production and engineering-communication networks in the regions through strengthening of public-private partnerships. However, it is worth noting that there is not enough work done.

Therefore, we need to develop and implement **the Concept on Introduction of Public-Private Partnerships**.

One of the major areas of our economy's untapped directions with huge potential is construction industry.

Reformation and further development of the construction sector will be one of the main objectives for the next year.

We should seriously think over **formation of a modern generation of construction contractors and builders**.

In this regard, **the programme of innovative development of construction industry till 2030** will be developed.

In this connection, we will create all the necessary conditions for attraction of qualified specialists from abroad as well as for professional development of local specialists in foreign countries.

So far, unfortunately, we have not paid enough attention to the important strategic sphere – introduction of aerospace technologies in leading spheres and sectors of the economy through satellite.

In order to develop this field, which is an essential condition and factor of modern development, we need to create our national space infrastructure by attracting foreign investors to implement projects based on public-private partnerships.

It is necessary to develop scientific-research institutes involved in this area and to strengthen their capacity.

We need to establish a separate state aerospace agency and address the challenges associated with development of this field.

#### **IV. Priority directions of social sphere development**

Dear Members of Parliament!

Dear deputies of regional and district councils!

Based on advanced international experience we must define legal notions of **“living wage”** and **“consumption basket”** for determining necessary income required for adequate living standard of citizens, and establish mechanisms for their practical implementation.

In the meantime, practical measures will be taken to gradually increase real incomes of the population, wages, scholarships, pensions and social allowances as well.

Despite our recent efforts in the sphere of **human health protection**, unfortunately, there are still many challenges remaining at local level.

Taking this into consideration, we will consistently continue our work on providing accessible, **quality and modern medical care** for the population of the regions, early detection of diseases. In this regard, we should adapt to our conditions the concepts of **“Smart Medicine”** and **“Single Medical Information Center”** that provide remote medical prevention.

At the same time, we will intensify our efforts to attract foreign investors to foster development of private medicine and to ensure permanent employment of foreign specialists in the country.

It is an open secret that **supplying the population with medicines** is one of the topical issues that people face. In order to address this issue in the near future, we will put into operation **2 thousand social pharmacies, which can provide the population with medicines at low prices**.

Today it is an imperative to thoroughly analyze services of screening centers, which play an important role in protecting health of mothers and children.

In 2018 we plan **to establish inter-district perinatal centers on the basis of 46 district and municipal medical associations**. They will be equipped with modern medical equipment, highly qualified personnel.

Moreover, it is foreseen to establish **modern diagnostic laboratories for early detection and prevention of diseases** in rural health centers, based on latest medical science achievements.

One of the most important outcomes of the reforms undertaken throughout this year is undoubtedly complete elimination of child labour and forced labour in our country.

It is noteworthy that such positive changes were recognized by the International Labor Organization and other agencies.

Dear friends!

In order to continue our efforts on upbringing healthy and harmonious younger generation, we adopted the new law “On State Youth Policy”. On its basis, we introduce new practical approaches in this sphere.

When speak about youth, I always think of one thing. Today, many young people are studying and working abroad. Of course, there are many of them who found their way living in a foreign land not less than anyone else. But, missing homeland is painful for everyone.

That is why we need to keep in touch with them, protect their rights and interests, and enhance the work on supporting those who want to return to our country.

To this end, we should establish **the International Association of Youth of Uzbekistan** and create necessary conditions for its effective functioning.

It is reasonable that young people should be in constant contact with persons of their age abroad in the fields of science, culture, business, sports and others. This creates a great opportunity for them to demonstrate their capacities globally. Therefore, it is planned to hold **the Central Asian Youth Forum** next year in Samarkand.

We will continue to focus our attention on deeper teaching of English and other foreign languages as priority. At the same time, we will strengthen our work on **training and professional development** in those specialties required for us.

Speaking about this, we should not say enough about the upbringing of mature people who are worthy successors of our great forefathers.

Nevertheless, we have no right to forget about the riches of intellectual and cultural potential, and to educate and educate rare talent.

It is true that developed countries have come to this level of development.

Unfortunately, some scholars in our country who have great scientific potential are among the most talented young people in the world.

The more Uzbeks today are serving in large foreign companies and banks, prominent universities and international organizations.

During my visits to foreign countries, I personally met and talked with dozens of fellow countrymen.

Our foreigners are provided with the necessary conditions for the provision of consular services and other services, their accession to the country, and the development of our country. We will further expand these efforts in the future.

In this regard, I propose **to develop a concept of public policy in the field of cooperation with our compatriots living and working abroad**.

Next year, we will continue to work on further improving the architectural image of our cities and villages.

We must not forget that every building, whether it is a kindergarten or a hospital, has a direct bearing on people's moods, besides maintaining their basic function. Therefore, in designing social facilities planned to be built in the regions, it is necessary to abandon the old patterns and introduce innovative approaches.

Taking into account the needs of the population, especially young families, old houses, and the needs of other categories of citizens, we have to continue to work hard to build cheap and high-quality housing.

For this purpose it is decided to increase the construction of cheap housing by 1.5-2 times by 2018. Next year, 20,000 houses will be built on standard designs. In particular, 1 thousand 491 apartments in 658 houses and multi-storey houses will be built for young families actively participating in the social life of the country. 971 houses for 1,171 houses and civil servants will be built for preventive inspectors. (Material from Z.Nizomiddinov).

Another important issue is the need to thoroughly revise the activities of private homeowner associations. The newly created ministries - the Ministry of Housing and Communal Services should take initiative.

New projects will be implemented in many new settlements, primarily in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, Khorezm, Bukhara, Jizzakh, Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya and Syrdarya regions to provide clean drinking water and sanitation services. Thus, around 580,000 people in the regions are provided with drinking water.

Distinguished participants of the meeting!

In 2018 we are planning to work on the construction of new roads, further development of transport and logistics infrastructure, improvement of quality of services:

First, rehabilitation of 180 kilometers of railways and electrification of more than 200 kilometers of railways;

Second, the construction of the Tashkent-Urgench-Khiva high-speed train and the Tashkent-Samarkand-Bukhara-Urgench-Khiva tourist train, the launch of the South Tashkent Railway Station and the new Khiva train station;

Third, the construction of a new railroad line between Bukhara-Miskin and Karshi-Zhetishek electrification and connecting with Shakhrisabz;

Fourth, to accelerate the construction of Tashkent-Sergeli and Yunusabad underground routes;

Fifth, the establishment of large transit hubs on highways and railways through the construction of modern infrastructure, providing high-quality service.

Construction of 2 thousand kilometers of fiber-optic communication systems in remote districts and increasing Internet bandwidth 2.5 times to fully cover telecommunication services and over 4,000 mobile base stations are planned to be launched. As a result of these measures more than 600 settlements will be provided with Internet and mobile communication. Measures will be developed and implemented to ensure that the population enjoys cultural leisure and leisure time. In order to improve the system of reliable preservation and rational use of objects of cultural heritage, it is necessary to adopt the program of archaeological research and preservation of archeological findings.

In the next year in Nukus city on strengthening the material and technical base of physical education and sports, the highest sports specializing in Olympic and national sports Youth school in Urgench, Universal sports complexes in Tashkent, Andijan, Samarkand, Bukhara, Lay the complex, multi-functional indoor swimming pool will be built. (Murtazo aka edits)

At the same time, material and spiritual support for our fellow citizens in the fields of science, culture, art and literature, including improving their housing, social and medical conditions, increasing the level of their salaries, all the decisions we make about the potential of our owners. Because true science, real creativity, is a difficult task like digging a well with this needle. The one who knows this is aware of it, and if he does not know it, he will be useful.

**V. Security, inter-ethnic accord and religious tolerance, as well as priorities in foreign policy.**

Deputies and senators!

We all know that global economic competition, information attacks and terrorist threats are gaining momentum. It is crucial to ensure close cooperation between government, religious organizations and non-governmental organizations to protect our people, our youth from aggression aimed at masking our sacred religion, and committing various acts of conspiracy and corruption. Therefore, in every province, we have to increase the responsibility of the deputy khokims and all the independent institutions directly involved in religious affairs. We need to further improve the work on social rehabilitation of citizens who have been misled by the ideas of extremism and return them to a healthy life. In order to prevent aggressive ideas disseminated through information resources, special units should be established within law enforcement agencies.

In our society, interfaith solidarity and we consider it as the most urgent and noble duty. For this purpose, we have the work of religious organizations in our country. It is important to note that the organizational structure of the defense system of the country, its military-combat situation, the level of spiritual and spiritual training of soldiers and officers are far behind the requirements of today's rapidly changing period. In the short run, concrete steps have been taken to reform the national army, and the radical change of the image of the Armed Forces has started. The newly-reaffirmed Doctrine of Doctrine plays an important role.

This doctrine defines the principle of openness of Uzbekistan's foreign policy, the development of friendly and practical relations with close neighbors. It is clearly defined as the priority task of strengthening the independence and sovereignty of our state. Taking into consideration the peculiarity of the geo-strategic location of our country, as well as the military-political situation in the region, the tasks and structures of the Armed Forces have been revised. The National Guard has been set up, and complex measures are being taken to provide the army with new weapons and modern military equipment. The State Committee for Defense Industry was established.

The Academy of Armed Forces has undergone a radical reorganization on the basis of systemic changes in military training. A great deal of work on social protection of servicemen, their families and veterans is underway. Speaking of this, it is worth noting that 100 multi-storey houses are being built for military personnel. New approaches have been introduced to the housing sector, including long-term, preferential mortgages. At the same time, we are well aware that in the field of defense we have new and important tasks.

First of all, the concept of the National Security Concept and the Defense Doc we need to do much more to ensure the effective and timely implementation of the trunks. Continue to further strengthen our defense capability, and increase the combat capability and capabilities of the Armed Forces, as well as the Defense Forces to provide the Armed Forces with modern weapons and military equipment. - We need to adopt a state program on forming and developing the industrial complex.

Dear compatriots!

In accordance with the Strategy of Action adopted in our country, we consistently pursue the policy of comprehensive development of the friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation with the neighboring countries, primarily neighboring countries and international structures in the foreign policy area. We take the necessary measures to timely and qualitatively implement the agreements and agreements concluded with all foreign states and international organizations of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Taking advantage of this, we always support the reforms in our country, to the representatives of international organizations, foreign ambassadors, sincere gratitude. Dear and esteemed compatriots! the plans and projects described in the draft law will undoubtedly contribute to the development of our country, the welfare of our people to a new, higher level. At the same time, we all well understand that we

have to create the appropriate legal framework and mechanisms for the full and effective implementation of these priorities. Therefore, Prime Minister A.Aripov, State Advisers U.Ismoilov, O.Murodov are all interested in the implementation of priority tasks, which come from this Appendix by all state and economic management bodies, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, regional, Tashkent city, to develop and approve complex measures until 10 January 2018.

Dear Friends!

Of course, 2018 will not be easy for us, which will be a crucial stage in implementing the goals and objectives stated in the application. I must say this clearly. But, in the words of our people, when it comes to water, it is important for us not to abandon the chosen path, even if it comes to the stone. Because in this life nothing happens spontaneously. If we do not act on our own, no one will help us indefinitely. All of us should understand and understand the truth: today we talk about the fate and future of our people, our Homeland, the happiness and prosperity of our dear children. we have to mobilize our intellect, knowledge and experience, our children's love and devotion to our Homeland. If we do not deceive ourselves, if we do not deceive ourselves, I am sure that we will work honestly, I really believe in all our goals. I am convinced that this is a strong will and creative potential of our noble people, who have gone through many trials first and foremost. I wish you all strength, energy, happiness and prosperity on the path to achieving our goals.

Thank you very much!

