

Uzbekistan's experience in achievement of sustainable development in the regions

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Abstract. The article discusses the experience of the Republic of Uzbekistan in achieving sustainable development in the regions of the country. Examples of effective improvements in condition and position in several global and national sustainable development goals by country are provided.

Key words: *Uzbekistan, regional development, sustainable development, region, economy, sustainable development goal, strategy.*

Introduction

Globalization of the world in recent years, natural, socio-economic, environmental, trade, political uncertainties, growing various risks and threats, the full implementation of the National Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remains an urgent task.

This, in turn, creates the need to adapt various strategies, concepts, target programs and road maps developed and implemented for the development of the country's economy and its regions to SDGs. Furthermore, with a deep systematic analysis of the achieved results, it creates the need to identify the emerging problems and determine the next steps in achieving the national goals and objectives of sustainable development.

The issue of sustainable development of regions is considered an urgent issue on the agenda of all institutional and regional structures at the global level. In particular, the Republic of Uzbekistan is also doing a number of things to ensure the sustainable development of the regions.

Uzbekistan is fully performing its obligations by ratifying the UN's "Sustainable Development Agenda Program until 2030". Decisions of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan On October 20, 2018 "On measures to implement national goals and objectives in the field of sustainable development until 2030", on February 21, 2022 "On additional measures to accelerate the implementation of national goals and objectives in the field of sustainable development until 2030" were adopted in order to implement the measures specified in this document.

As a result of serious interest and efforts to adapt the global "Sustainable Development Goals" to the needs of the country, a number of activities were defined as the priority directions of the country's socio-economic development in the action strategy of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021 and in "Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026" which is in practice nowadays.

In the development strategy of the new Uzbekistan, the main principle "On the road to human dignity" envisages further increasing the welfare of the people, transforming the economy, accelerating the development of entrepreneurship, ensuring human rights and interests, and forming an active civil society. At the same time, by 2030, it aims to enter the upper group of middle-income countries by ensuring the growth of per capita income to 4,000 US dollars¹. Currently, legal, institutional and economic foundations are being gradually created and implemented to ensure the sustainable development of the country and its regions.

Achieved results and implemented measures in the field of improving the welfare of the population consists of - reducing poverty (goal 1), improving nutrition (goal 2), promoting a healthy lifestyle (goal 3), ensuring universal quality education (goal 4) , expanding the rights and opportunities of women (goal 5), ensuring employment of men and women (goal 8) and reducing social inequality (goal 10).

We will touch on some of the work being carried out in Uzbekistan and the results achieved in order to achieve the national goals of sustainable development.

1st goal. Comprehensive reduction of poverty level of the population. Systematic work is being carried out by introducing the national poverty reduction model in the regions of Uzbekistan. Starting from 2021, the national level of poverty in the republic is calculated on the basis of minimum consumption expenses. Based on this criterion, poverty in 2021 was 17 percent, and in 2022 it was 14 percent.

2nd goal. Ensuring food safety, improving nutrition and sustainable development of agriculture. Despite the uncertainties and price fluctuations caused by the coronavirus pandemic in the world food markets, Uzbekistan is carrying out a number of activities on local and regional development in the field of agriculture.

In recent years, a number of systematic works have been carried out in the field of food production in Uzbekistan. In particular:

- drought-resistant varieties of crops are being created and introduced;
- agriculture is carried out intensively;

¹ Decree No. PF-60 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated January 28, 2022 "On the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026". <https://lex.uz/docs/5841063> (date of application - 07.12.2023).

- 2 and 3 harvests are obtained from agricultural lands in exchange for repeated crops;
- allotment of additional land areas for the planting of crops in rural areas in order to meet the needs of the population for food products and engage in additional economic activities
- cotton fields were reduced, fruit orchards and vineyards were increased due to the use of freed land, in 2016 fruit and grapes were grown on 349 thousand hectares or 9.4% of the total cultivated area, and by 2019, their area will be 456 thousand hectares, in 2021 reached 496 thousand hectares.
- also, traditional orchards with low productivity are gradually being transformed into intensive orchards with high productivity. These shifts create a solid foundation for sustainable agricultural development.

Uzbekistan took first place in terms of food security in the Global Food Security Index (GFSI) 2019–2022, improving its performance by 6.1 points during the period, and rising from 85th place to 73rd place in the overall ranking².

3rd goal. To promote a healthy lifestyle and help the well-being of people of all ages. A significant reduction in child and infant mortality is observed in the country. In particular, in 2017–2021, the number of infant deaths per 1,000 newborns decreased from 15.4 to 12.3, and child mortality decreased from 11.5 to 9.2.

In recent years, the government of Uzbekistan has been implementing a large-scale program of reforming national legislation in the field of health, aimed at ensuring widespread access to qualified medical personnel, affordable drugs and updated infrastructure. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the main shortcomings of the healthcare system were identified, such as a reduction in the number of doctors per capita in Uzbekistan, inequality in the use of medical services, insufficient quality of services provided in some places, and unsatisfactory prevention and control of infectious diseases³.

The number of families in which the share of medical care expenses in the composition of total household expenses is an average of 25% increased in 2019, but as a result of the strong social policy of the country during the pandemic, it decreased by 2.9% or 0.5 points in 2020. In recent years, the volume of healthcare financing has increased from 7.1 trillion soums in 2017, to 12.1 trillion soums in 2019, and to 19.4 trillion soums in 2021.

4th goal. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all. In recent years, there has been a steady increase in the coverage of children aged 3-6 years by the

² <https://impact.economist.com/sustainability/project/food-security-index>

³ Реформирование здравоохранения в Узбекистане: какова роль международного сообщества? Себастьян Пейруз, <https://www.iphronline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/UZB-report-3.12-1.pdf>.

preschool education system, from 40% in 2019 to 67.2% by 2021. By 2026, this indicator is expected to reach 80%.

A particularly positive trend is the increase in pre-school enrollment of girls, which until 2019 had traditionally been low compared to boys' enrollment, as is the case at all levels of education. Active promotion of the involvement of the private sector in the system and the increase in the number of family pre-school education institutions have expanded the possibilities for increasing the level of coverage of pre-school education (including children from low-income families).

Table 1.

Availability of general education schools with necessary conditions (percentage)⁴

Provision of conditions	2017 year	2022 year
Electricity	99,0	99,8
Internet access for educational purposes	87,9	92,5
Provision of computers for educational purposes	87,3	97,7
Provision of accessible infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities	-	38,0
Supply of clean drinking water	34,4	86,5
Provision of basic hand washing facilities	59,0	90,9

In the regions, the provision of educational institutions with the necessary equipment, including sanitary-hygienic means - hand washing facilities, sources of drinking water and minimally equipped individual toilets - has increased significantly. The percentage of schools connected to the Internet for educational purposes and computers for educational purposes reached 92.5 percent in 2021 (Table 1).

5th goal. Ensuring gender equality and expanding the rights and opportunities of all women. In the territories of Uzbekistan, a number of positive actions are being taken to regulate the legal, economic and social protection of women against any discrimination and violence, the country has ratified all the main international agreements in this direction.

The implementation of the gender equality strategy in Uzbekistan until 2030 implies a comprehensive approach to the implementation of the principle of equality between women and men in all areas and in all regions. In 2022-2026, the national program for increasing the activity of women in all aspects of the economic, political and social life of the country was approved. In particular, the issue of women's employment is gaining importance on the agenda (Figure 1).

⁴ Compiled by the author based on the data of the Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

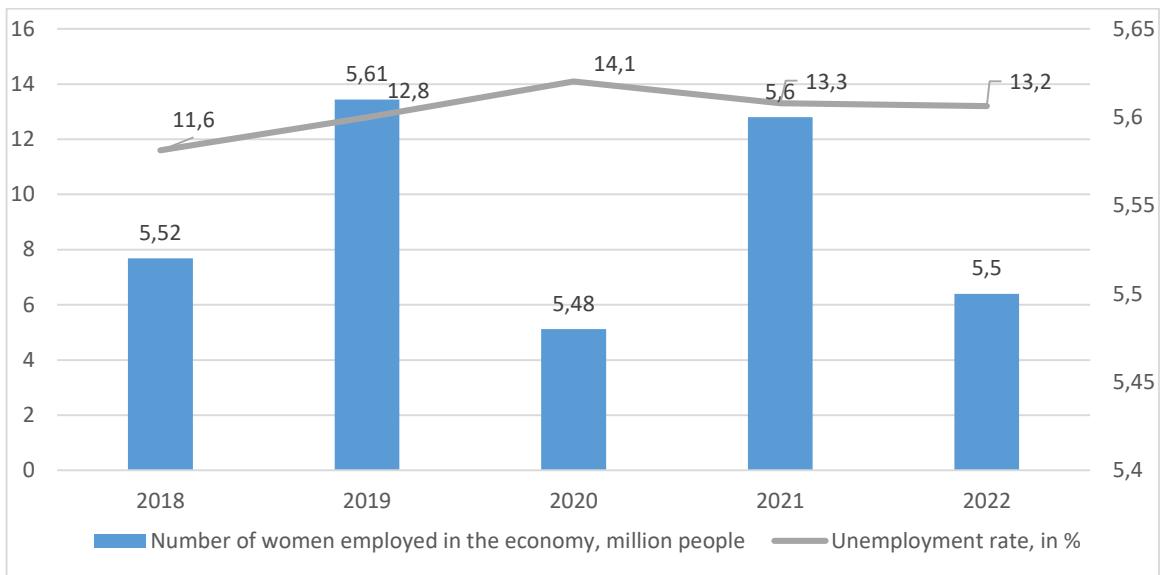


Figure 1. Dynamics of female employment and unemployment rate.

8th goal. Promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth based on increased productive employment and decent work for men and women.

Relatively stable economic growth has been achieved in Uzbekistan in recent years as a result of measures and mechanisms for economic diversification and reform. The growth rate of real GDP per capita was 2.7 percent in 2017 and 5.3 percent in 2022. During this period, GDP per employed population increased by 2.0 times. Industry and construction sectors contributed the most to GDP growth.

All efforts and opportunities are being used in order to achieve stable economic growth of regions in Uzbekistan. International experience and domestic capabilities are used in this. As a result of the ongoing reforms, significant results are being achieved in the socio-economic development of the regions.

List of used literature:

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