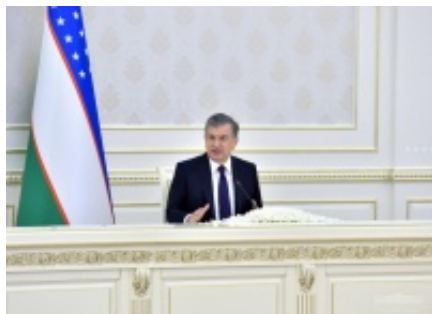


## Important tasks for increasing youth spirituality and meaningfully organizing their leisure are outlined

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**On March 19, a videoconference meeting on enhancing attention to youth issues, their extensive involvement in spiritual development, arts and sports, developing skills in using information technologies, promoting reading among the growing generation and ensuring women's employment was held under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev.**

Thirty percent of Uzbekistan's population is young people at the age from 14 to 30. Modern conditions and opportunities have been created for them to attain education and professions. However, pressing is the issue of organizing meaningful leisure for youth. The higher the spirituality of youth, the stronger their immunity to alien phenomena and ideas.

The Head of the state had earlier forwarded five important initiatives to organize social, spiritual and enlightenment activities on the new system.

The first one envisages increasing the interest of youth in music, arts, literature, theater and other types of arts, serving to realize their talents.

The second initiative implies physical conditioning of youth, creation of conditions necessary for the exercise of their abilities in sports.

The third initiative deals with the effective use of computer technologies and the internet by the population and youth.

The fourth is the organization of systemic activities to improve youth spirituality and promote the reading of books.

The fifth is to ensure women's employment.

These initiatives were voiced during the President's trip to Syrdarya region. In a short period of time, large-scale activities have been undertaken in this region.

The district and municipal libraries of the region have been delivered 300 thousand copies of fiction. Schools of music and arts were provided with musical instruments, sports facilities were supplied with equipment.

Activities in this direction continued in Namangan region where a Caravan of Enlightenment has been set up. 25 thousand books, 80 kinds of sports equipment and musical instruments were delivered to the region.

These initiatives have been welcomed by Uzbekistan people, especially by youth, with great enthusiasm.

Issues of widespread introduction of this experience in all regions of the country were discussed at the meeting.

It was noted that more than 800 cultural centers are operating in Uzbekistan today, 312 schools of music and arts cover as few as 130 thousand boys and girls. Most of these institutions are not sufficiently provided with textbooks, musical compilations, musical instruments and equipment.

The Head of the state instructed to study the financial and technical capacities and the degree of operation of cultural centers, schools of music and arts at places, and improve their activities.

The ministries of Culture and Public Education have been tasked to organize, in cooperation with khokimiyats, an additional 1.5 thousand hobby clubs in municipal and district cultural centers and secondary schools, based on the interests of youth. It was noted that it is essential to establish artistic-amateur groups, youth theater studios, clubs in the cultural centers involving active talented youth and sponsors.

Taking into account the positive practice of attracting famous artists and writers to the districts to assist in raising the level of culture, instructions were given to spread this experience throughout the country. Thus, renowned artists will be assigned to the districts and cities as creative advisors. They will be responsible for the development of culture and art at places, and khokims of district and cities will provide financial and organizational support for these efforts.

Attention has been paid to the enhancement of training personnel with higher education in the field of music and arts.

The Ministries of Higher and Secondary Special Education and Public Education have been instructed to organize lessons on specific topics in museums, at historical monuments, pilgrimage sites and theaters.

During the discussion of the issues of promoting physical culture and sports among youth, it was emphasized that more than 12 thousand sports facilities operate in the country, yet the level of coverage of physical culture and mass sports for young people

remains insufficient. The extent of equipment of general education schools with sports accessories is 56 percent, while it is 12 percent in Surkhandarya region, 14 percent in Khorezm, and 15 percent in Karakalpakstan.

Measures were outlined at the meeting for the wide involvement of youth in physical culture and sports.

Deputy khokims of districts and cities on youth issues were instructed to study, together with specialists, the extent of interest of youth in sports and the level of equipment of sports facilities, to work out corresponding proposals, and the Cabinet of Ministers to determine the source of funding required for the implementation of proposals.

The need was noted for the construction of small gyms in remote villages using lightweight structures and sandwich panels, creating fields with artificial turf, providing entrepreneurs with land for sports facilities. Businesspeople who come forward with such an initiative will be allocated concessional loans under the program "Youth is our future" by the National Bank for Foreign Economic Activity of Uzbekistan.

It was noted that a good result would be secured by the appointment of well-known athletes who won international competitions as headmasters of sports schools at places, as well as by the targeted training of athletes in special correspondence departments of universities. Instructions were given to increase the number of youth sports schools.

At the videoconference meeting, special attention was also paid to protecting young people from the negative impact on the internet, teaching them how to effectively use information technologies.

The Ministry for Development of Information Technologies and Communications was instructed to arrange training centers in digital technologies, based on international best practices, in all cities and district centers. These centers will offer free courses on e-commerce and programming, doing business in information technologies, and will assist start-up projects.

The poor level of internet access in schools, despite the presence of computer equipment, has been criticized. The Ministries of Public Education and for the Development of Information Technologies and Communications have been instructed to elaborate an action plan to provide computer classes in all schools with modern technology and high-speed internet access until 2021.

The need was noted for supporting the initiatives of entrepreneurs in organization of computer gaming centers, in which tests, quizzes, developing strategies and other useful programs serving to expand the knowledge and horizons of children and youth.

The awakening of the love for book from the younger age, the formation of independent thinking and broad outlook are the key to achieving success in life. However, in many villages and communities there are no necessary conditions for reading. Information resource centers organized instead of former libraries have not been able to cope with the tasks assigned to them.

In this regard, within the framework of the new initiative it is planned to deliver additional quantities of books to places, taking into account the needs of children.

The Head of the state instructed the responsible ministries and agencies to publish, within the framework of the Caravan of Enlightenment project, artistic, cognitive, social literature books in the amount of not less than 1 million copies and deliver to the Republic of Karakalpakstan and all regions of the country.

It was noted at the meeting that local khokimiyats should organize one exemplary bookstore in each city and district center. Information and Mass Communications Agency was tasked to deploy mobile book shelters in all cities and districts, provide library services to rural residents through the bibliobuses.

Women's employment issues were also discussed at the meeting.

In 2019-2020, 195 garment-knitting enterprises with the use of sandwich panels are planned to be built in all districts. Densely populated territories, with higher labor force, were selected for these industries. It is expected that as a result of the establishment of enterprises more than 24 thousand permanent jobs will be created for women.

The President noted that there are much more women who want to work than the jobs created, and pointed to the need for arranging work in two shifts and producing in-demand products at enterprises.

For the broad implementation of these five initiatives, all regions were assigned responsible leaders. Thus, the Chairman of the Jokargy Kenes of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, khokims of regions, districts and cities, the city of Tashkent, the leadership of the Nuroni, Makhalla funds, the Women's Committee, the Youth Union will be personally responsible for the execution of the tasks.

Relevant information was heard on the issues considered.