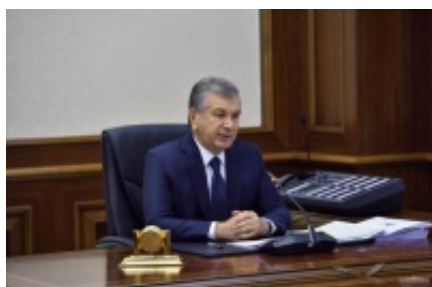


## Issues of supporting citizens working abroad discussed

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**On August 17, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev chaired a videoconference on creating decent conditions for citizens working abroad and working systematically with them.**

It should be noted that this issue is being discussed in this format for the first time in the history of Uzbekistan.

Every year, 600-700 thousand people enter the labor market of Uzbekistan. As a result of measures taken to develop economic sectors and regions, up to 500 thousand jobs are created per year. Consequently, employment of almost 200 thousand people has to be provided by external labor migration. This is a natural process that all developing countries go through. Where labor migration is organized properly, there is an increase in employment and family income, and an increase in the skilled labor force.

In recent years, much attention has been paid to protecting the rights and improving the living conditions of our compatriots abroad. International agreements on labor migration have been concluded with Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Japan and the United Arab Emirates. A Fund has been created to support citizens working abroad and more than 100 billion UZS have been allocated for this purpose. At the same time, the position of the Advisor to the Prime Minister on External Labor Migration has been introduced. Despite this, there are enough problems waiting to be solved in this system.

Issues of social, legal, material and cultural support for our fellow citizens working abroad were discussed at the meeting.

The Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations, the Ministry of Supporting Mahalla and Family and khokimiyats were instructed to assist compatriots who returned from abroad in employment, taking into account their profession, qualifications and future plans.

The importance of expanding cooperation with major employers was noted, so that Uzbekistan citizens abroad could work in decent conditions. To do this, first of all, it is necessary to train qualified specialists in accordance with the requirements of these enterprises.

In this regard, it is planned to introduce a new system. The authority of territorial branches of the Agency for External Labor Migration will be expanded with the right to conclude direct contracts with foreign employers and negotiate with migration services.

The branch manager will be considered an assistant to the regional khokim.

Responsible persons were instructed to negotiate with major employers in foreign countries, increase the number of specialists in demand, as well as allocate low-interest loans of up to 10 million UZS to migrant workers for travel expenses and expenses related to obtaining a patent and insurance.

The Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan of August 11, 2020 defines measures to train population in professions in demand on the labor market, the basics of entrepreneurship and foreign languages. Practical aspects of implementation of this document were discussed at the meeting. Issues of improving citizens' skills who want to work abroad, creating vocational training centers, organizing courses and mono centers for this purpose were considered. The importance of adapting the educational programs of these institutions and developing competencies to the needs of foreign employers was noted.

The Head of the state instructed to attract funds from the Fund for Supporting and Protection of the Rights and Interests of Citizens engaged in working abroad for life and health insurance of migrant workers.

Instructions were given on simplifying exit procedures and open representative offices of the Agency for External Labor Migration in the cities with a large number of our compatriots. The task was set to strengthen the legal protection of citizens abroad, create an online platform and a call center for this purpose and attract qualified lawyers.

The President noted that Uzbekistan embassies should strengthen relations with diasporas of our compatriots abroad. Proposals were made to recognize merits and award persons who, out of patriotic and noble feelings, help Uzbekistan people abroad.

It was noted that culture is an important connecting link between workers abroad and their Homeland. Instruction was given to hold more cultural events for them. It was recommended to widely cover the activities of embassies and consulates on television for people's benefit.

The Ministry of Supporting Family and Mahalla has been instructed, together with khokimiyats, to regularly visit families of citizens who work abroad, to inquire about the health of their parents, their children's education and to help solve their problems.

The need for supporting entrepreneurial initiatives of citizens who returned from abroad after working or studying was emphasized. A system of targeted work with such compatriots and their financial support will be created for this purpose.

Thus, heads of sectors, representatives of labor bodies and mahallas will form lists of those who want to engage in entrepreneurship and consider their business projects. They will provide assistance in registration, providing rental subsidies for up to 3 months. In addition, credit resources will be allocated for starting a business with partial compensation for the cost of the insurance policy on credit collateral. By the end of the year, 25 billion UZS will be allocated from Employment Assistance Fund for these purposes and 100 billion UZS will be allocated for loans.

It is noteworthy that only 4,500 people are registered in the system for recording the length of service of citizens working abroad. In this regard, responsible persons were instructed to extend the procedure for registering and calculating work experience to migrant workers, similar to that applied to self-employed persons.

Deputy Prime Ministers were instructed to develop a separate program on organized migration, which provides for introduction of a system of economic, financial and organizational-legal assistance. The program will cover such issues as professional and language training, development of skills to work abroad, travel expenses, obtaining a patent, insurance, pensions and loans. Measures will be defined to create decent conditions for compatriots through intergovernmental commissions, as well as mechanisms for crediting them through foreign banks.

Heads of responsible ministries and agencies, regional khokims and ambassadors of Uzbekistan to foreign countries reported on the priority tasks identified at the meeting.

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