

## Festive congratulation by the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan

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Dear compatriots!

I congratulate from the bottom of my heart all of you and our entire nation on the 25th anniversary of the state independence of Uzbekistan that opened up an absolutely new page in the centuries-long history of our country, liberated our nation from the chains of despotic regime and paved the way to build a free and prosperous life.

Dear friends!

All of us are well aware that in the history of any people and any nation it was not an easy endeavor to gain independence. Our people, who deeply comprehend this truth, forever cherish in their hearts the memory of our fathers and forefathers, who showed selflessness and sacrificed their lives in this struggle.

In these very days, when we recall the transition period from the old regime, which didn't justify itself, to a new system, we involuntarily recollect the days of hardships and difficult trials that we have gone through.

Especially, it is not difficult to imagine to what extent the situation in our republic became dangerous due to the legacy brought about by the former regime in the following examples: above all, the issue of provision completely derailed; there remained the stocks of flour to feed our people sufficient just for seven or ten days; the order and discipline became frail; various subversive and evil forces rose heads and our country found itself nearly on the brink of an abyss.

Even in that very perilous situation we didn't turn back from the chosen path – our path of independence. Since, we understood well that showing weakness before various hardships and obstacles in such moments, when our destiny was at stake, was similar to betrayal of today's and forthcoming generations.

It was in those very times, when our people, by demonstrating in practice their resoluteness and steadfastness, did not lose their belief in the bright and great future of our Uzbekistan and Insha'Allah will never ever lose it.

Indeed, since the early days of Independence, no matter how hard and dangerous was our situation

and regardless of how busy we were with tackling the obstacles, impediments and various problems that emerged at every step, we did not stop the work on the deeply thought-out strategy corresponding today's and future development of our country.

In achieving our great goals that we have set forward – building free and democratic state, transition to a market economy, constructing a civil society and along the path of elevating our country to the ranks of the developed states, we did not allow for rush and inconsistency, but learned the progressive world experience and didn't blindly copy the pattern from others. In this regard, based on the idea which has a deep meaning: "The reforms are not for the sake of reforms, but for the sake of a man", we found it appropriate for ourselves and endeavored to implement the far-sighted path acknowledged in the international community as the "Uzbek model", which meets the peculiarities pertaining to our nation and local conditions.

The life itself has been proving to what extent our strategy of progress based on famous five principles, despite hard trials, turns out to be right, and how it serves as a solid foundation for the development of our country. Its confirmation can be vividly observed in the example of the task of training the new generation cadres, who meet the modern requirements. This has been our most acute and decisive issue since the early days of achieving the Independence.

If 19 years ago we didn't reject the clichés and remnants of the past and adopt the National program for cadres training and its logical continuation – the National program for school development, if we didn't completely change the system of education and upbringing, and if we didn't consolidate the power and capabilities of our state and society for these purposes, then it is not difficult to imagine in what situation we would find ourselves today.

We have all grounds to speak without any hesitation: the thousands of our youth, who at present graduate from the lyceums, colleges and higher educational institutions and have a new vision of the world, enter the arena as a solid rock for us and our future, as an initiator and executor of all reforms being carried out in our country.

The timely adoption of the programs aimed at upbringing such a new generation capable to take on the future and destiny of our Motherland and taking these programs up to the level of state policy truly play a decisive role in building a new society.

We would speak the very truth if we say that during historically short period Uzbekistan – once the backward republic, which was not capable to feed and protect itself, with a lopsided economy, when the cotton monopoly reached catastrophic scales and living standards of the population went down to an extremely miserable level, has now been turning into a powerful state, which dynamically and steadily progresses and occupies a commendable place in the world community.

During the years of independence our economy grew nearly 6 times. The share of industry in its structure reached from 14 percent to 34 percent. Despite the ongoing global financial and economic

crisis, for over the past 11 years the growth rates of the GDP – among the very few states – have been making up not less than 8 percent. It should be said that the calculations on the outcomes of the first half of 2016 show that this year our growth rates won't be less than these indicators as well.

Most importantly, during the past period the health condition of our people improved. The maternal mortality decreased 3.2 times and child mortality – 3.4 times. The average life expectancy increased from 66 years to 73.5 years and among women – to 76 years. By the end of 2016 the number of our population will exceed 32 million people and it means that during the years of independence our population increased by 12 million people. All of this vividly confirms what a profound path of progress we have traversed and how the living standards and well-being of our people are growing.

All of the aforesaid is implemented, above all, thanks to heroic labor of our courageous and steadfast people. Our country with its sustainable growth rates raises admiration of the international community.

Dear compatriots!

All of us well understand that our enormous wins and achievements make up only a certain part of the goals set by us.

The rapidly changing time, the uncertainty, volatility and crisis ongoing in the world markets, the aggravation and ferocity of competition, plunging of raw prices – all of these circumstances require from all of us, and primarily, from the people holding the managerial and high-ranking posts to completely reject the old views, approaches and methods of work and adhere to a new way of thinking, elevate the system of organizing of labor and management to a modern level.

Above all, the tasks of continuation of the launched reforms in terms of democratic renewal and modernization of the country, raising its competitiveness, deepening the structural changes, reducing the state's presence, expanding the share of private property and ensuring its priority in our economy must occupy a decisive place. Along with this, the tasks of expanding the benefits in our country to enhance the efficiency of private entrepreneurship and small business, increase the volume of foreign investments and introduce modern high technologies should always be in the focus of our attention.

Today the escalation of confrontation and contradictions in our near and far neighborhood, continuation of various conflicts and bloodshed, ever aggravation of danger of terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking cannot but concern each and every one of us, and require from all of us to live always alert and vigilant.

In such an emerging complex situation ensuring the security of Uzbekistan, maintaining the inviolability of our borders, keeping various dangers aloof from our threshold, preserving as an apple of an eye the climate of interethnic and civil accord, mutual respect, mercy and clemency reigning in our country, and implementing the noble appeal which goes: "We need peace and tranquility" must be the duty and

priority task of all of us.

The main directions of the foreign policy conducted by Uzbekistan are as follows: we stand for non-interference in internal affairs of other states and resolution of all emerging conflicts and confrontations by way of peace and political negotiations.

We believe it is appropriate for us not to join any military and political blocs and alliances, not to allow for military bases of foreign states in the territory of our country and deployment of our military beyond our borders.

During the years of Independence we have been making the efforts to strengthen the ties of mutual respect based on recognition of mutual interests, above all, enhance the relations of cooperation and solidarity with our near and far neighbors, and we stand ready to continue this very policy.

Dear compatriots!

These days our entire nation is enthusiastically welcoming and applauding our young sportsmen, who secured a great victory by winning 4 gold, 2 silver and 7 bronze medals at the XXXI Summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro of Brazil. All of us have a right to say with pride and honor that the courage and devotion, skills and steadfastness, and love for our Homeland demonstrated by our brave sons in the intense contests against the leading athletes from 206 countries of the world became a real example to follow for thousands of our youth.

I express my deep and sincere gratitude to our skillful sportspeople, their parents, coaches and trainers, and all members of our national Olympic team who raised our flag high and showed the entire world that the youth of Uzbekistan are indeed not inferior to anyone.

I appeal to you, our youth and my dear children, and say: "Never give up! This time is ours! The victory is ours".

Dear compatriots!

I once again congratulate you and our entire nation on the Independence Day. I wish all of you peace and tranquility, happiness and prosperity, plenty and abundance to your homes and our beloved country.

Let Almighty support and assist us in all our noble endeavors!

Let our country be peaceful, our sky clear and our people safe and sound!

Let our Independence be eternal!

**Islam Karimov,**

**President of the Republic of Uzbekistan**

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