

## New system pending introduction to consider appeals from entrepreneurs and investors

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**On May 27, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev convened a meeting to discuss the launch of receptions designated to consider appeals from entrepreneurs.**

Entrepreneurship development has been defined as one of the main areas of economic policy in the country. In recent years, a number of important decrees and resolutions have been adopted to improve the business environment and secure extensive engagement of the population in entrepreneurship. Procedures for obtaining permits are significantly simplified, audits of financial and economic activities of business entities have been lessened. The programs "Every family entrepreneur", "Youth is our future" have come to be instrumental in supporting those wishing to embark on business. As a result, the number of new entities have grown 2.3 times.

However, there are still cases of red tape, extortion and hindrance of the activities of entrepreneurs on the local level. Thus, in the first quarter of this year, 16,000 appeals from businesspeople were received by the People's reception offices. They mainly concern issues of land allocation, gas, electricity and water supply, agriculture, credit and taxation. About 2 thousand appeals reflected complaints about actions or inaction of officials.

For systemic solution of such problems, to provide effective assistance to entrepreneurs, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan signed a decree on May 14 this year outlining measures to fundamentally improve the system of supporting and protection of entrepreneurial activity. In accordance with the document, Prime Minister's reception offices for consideration of entrepreneurs' appeals are being organized.

Measures to streamline the activities of these receptions have been discussed at the meeting.

The President noted the need for establishing a national working group headed by the Minister of Justice and Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, holding open and constructive local meetings with entrepreneurs. It was indicated that the regional khokims would deal with the identified problems of regional significance; the Prime Minister would address those of the national importance; once a week they will consider issues raised at those receptions.

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It was stressed that the receptions are expected to work in three stages. First of all, on the basis of the daily schedules approved by the receptions, representatives of khokimiyats, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, prosecutors, justice, tax authorities, structures responsible for investments, construction, cadastre, as well as banks and other organizations will receive entrepreneurs.

Appeals that could not be resolved at this stage would be sent to regional receptions. In the case the result cannot be achieved, appeals will be considered at the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers with participation of the Business Ombudsman, the officials of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and authorized agencies.

If the problem is not solved even at this stage, the Prime Minister will receive the entrepreneurs personally. Receptions are tasked with analyzing the appeals and, on this basis, coordinating the activities of ministries and agencies, introducing proposals to the Administration of the President and the Oliy Majlis to further improve the conditions for entrepreneurs.

One of the key objectives of the Prime Minister's receptions is to assist foreign investors. Therefore, these offices are to be staffed with specialists who speak foreign languages and have necessary competence to work with investors.

Directives have been identified for monitoring problems that impede the attraction of investments and for addressing the challenges investors face in various government bodies.

At the meeting, the President urged the heads of sectors and state bodies to provide all-round assistance to entrepreneurs, discuss the activities of officials in this direction during sessions of the Kengashes of people's deputies.

Attention is paid to issues of transparency and speedy consideration of complaints. The Ministry for Development of Information Technologies and Communications was instructed to implement a single electronic portal that allows one to monitor the movement of appeals.

It was recommended to discuss the essence of the new system and introduce it to entrepreneurs, to widely cover the activities of reception offices in the media.

The officials briefed the Head of the state on issues discussed at the meeting.