

Uzbekistan independence day

23 years of dynamic growth and prosperity

Farrukh Tursunov
AMBASSADOR OF UZBEKISTAN

On Sept. 1, the people of Uzbekistan celebrate the 23rd anniversary of Independence. Over this period, under the leadership of H.E. President Islam Karimov, Uzbekistan has turned into a modern, stable country maintaining a sustainable pace in an industrializing economy. Uzbekistan has grown into a country that relies on its own power and capacities to defend its borders and the peaceful and harmonious life of its citizens.

Over the 23 years of independent development, the national economy of Uzbekistan grew by 4.1 times and the real income of the population rose 8.2 times. The country also saw the annual GDP growth rate



President of the Republic of Uzbekistan H.E. Islam Karimov

over the last 7 years exceed 8 percent.

A favorable business environment, the concession of a broad system of legal guaran-

tees and privileges for investors greatly increased foreign investment in the country. Over this period more than \$162 billion in capital investments were assimilated into the economy, including \$56 billion in foreign investments. A free industrial economic zone was set up in the city of Navoi and special industrial zones were set up in the towns of Angren and Jizzak, creating one of the most liberal and attractive free economic zones in the region. Furthermore, Uzbekistan possesses large production capacity and strong mineral resource potential, boasting more than 100 minerals, of which 60 are already in use in the economy.

As time progresses, we are again convinced of the correctness of the well thought-out strategy of democratic reforms we opted for, known throughout the world as the "Uzbek Model" of development that completely caters to the interests of the people.

Meanwhile, the biggest asset of Uzbekistan is its hardworking 30.5 million people, who account for 55 percent of the population of the entire Central Asian region. In Uzbekistan, more than 120 nationalities live together in an atmosphere of peace, friendship and interethnic and civic harmony.

President Karimov at independence celebrations said, "Independence means build-

ing a robust backbone for our future, fostering a comprehensively advanced, independent-thinking, courageous new generation inferior to no one in anything, a generation capable of continuing our great undertakings."

At the initiative of Karimov, 2014 was declared the Year of the Healthy Child, which was a logical continuation of a socially oriented government policy whose priority has been to raise a harmoniously developed, spiritually mature younger generation. Along with this state program, \$302.9 million was allocated for strengthening education and children's health care system, including supporting their material-technical base.

Uzbekistan is a consistently modernizing country, working to deepen democratic reforms and liberalize all aspects of society, while further increasing living standards.

Nationwide elections for the parliament (Oliy Majlis) and regional and city councils will be held in December and, as such, deep reforms aimed at the development of an effective and democratic election system were undertaken. Particularly, amendments to laws "on election to the Oliy Majlis," "on election to regional and city councils," and "on election to the presidency of Uzbekistan" were concluded in 2003 and 2008. Additionally, 2011, 2012 and 2014 saw several con-

Enjoying close historical ties, modern strategic partnership

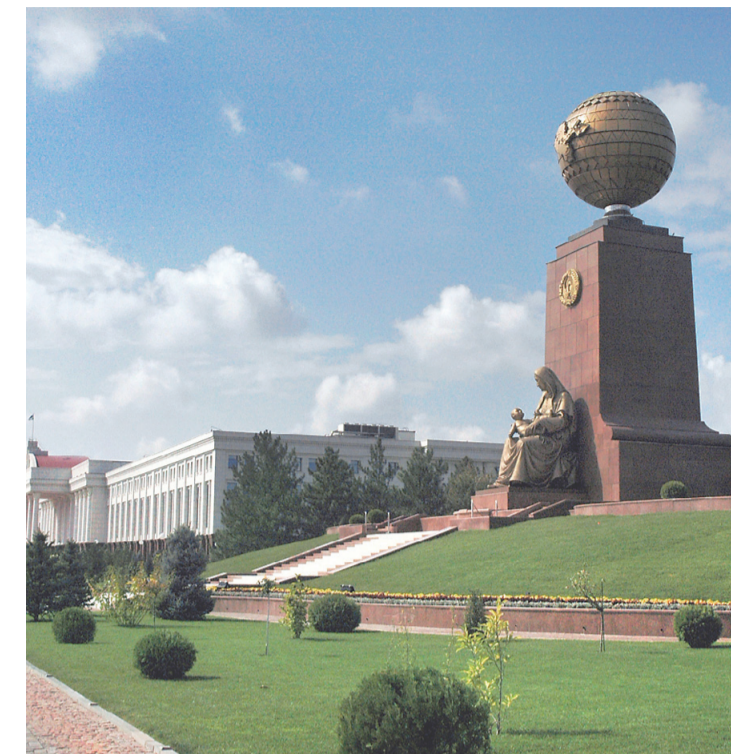
Taro Aso
CHAIRMAN OF THE JAPAN-UZBEKISTAN PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE



I would like to express my heartfelt felicitations to the government and people of Uzbekistan on the occasion of the 23rd anniversary of Independence. Uzbekistan is a key partner of Japan in Central Asia. Our countries maintain traditionally close relations, which have deep historical roots. Uzbekistan was one of the centers of Great Silk Road and a cradle of ancient civilization.

During my visit to Uzbekistan in May 2014, I discussed with President Islam Karimov the issue of strengthening our strategic partnership with the acceleration of political, economic and cultural relations. Furthermore, we are expanding cooperation in such spheres as energy, telecommunications, electrical engineering and education with Uzbekistan, which has seen its economy grow 8.2 percent annually over the past 7 years.

Finally, I wish the people of Uzbekistan peace, health, prosperity and for the further development of friendly and warm relations between our nations.



In the center of the capital Tashkent, Independence Square features a mother and child statue and Independence monument. EMBASSY OF UZBEKISTAN



Oliy Majlis (the Supreme Assembly) is the parliament of Uzbekistan. EMBASSY OF UZBEKISTAN

stitutional article amendments, which provided step-by-step, continuous liberalization of the national election system, creating a bicameral parliament in accordance with the requirements of the law and internationally recognized principles and norms.

Japan is one of the time-tested key and strategic partners of Uzbekistan. Regular exchange of visits on high governmental and parliamentary levels, the growing interest in establish-

ing further cooperation of business-economic groups and a richness of cultural and humanitarian cooperation represent our modern dynamic.

The official visit by the President Karimov to Japan in February 2011 afforded a potent impetus to the development of strategic cooperation between our countries.

Then Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited Uzbekistan in August 2006. Additionally, Japan's Finance Minister and Deputy Prime

Minister Taro Aso and Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Toshimitsu Motegi visited Uzbekistan in 2014, holding meetings with the leadership of Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan has also consistently supported Japan's aspiration to a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council. Our Japanese partners stress Uzbekistan's key role in ensuring security, stability and sustainable development in the region. Tokyo welcomes the efforts of Uzbekistan in addressing regional issues, including the use of water resources in Central Asia region based on universally recognized principles of international law with regard to the interests of the region's states. Uzbekistan and Japan are making an important contribution to the socioeconomic development and stabilization of Afghanistan.

The third Foreign Ministers' Meeting of the "Central Asia plus Japan" dialogue was held in Tashkent in 2010. Additionally, Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov held negotiations with his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida during the fifth Foreign Ministers Meeting in Bishkek in July, 2014.

In 2012 our countries celebrated the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations. However, the history of relations between our countries goes back to the dawn of the Great Silk Road. There are many UNESCO World Heritage site cities and historical cities along the Great Silk Road, including Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva and Tashkent.

Twice weekly direct Uzbekistan Airways flights from Narita to Tashkent contribute to an increasing number of Japanese tourists to Uzbekistan.

An important role in the modern development of trade and economic relations is played by the joint Uzbek-Japanese Committee on Economic Cooperation whose 11th session held in Tashkent in March, 2013 and the Joint Business Forum held in Tashkent on Aug. 7, 2014. JICA, JETRO, the Uzbek-Japanese Center and representatives from 20 Japanese companies are actively working in Uzbekistan.

A solid foundation of historical and cultural ties, as well as the current strong potential of economic and political cooperation will further serve for deepening the Uzbek-Japanese strategic partnership.

Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Uzbekistan
on the Occasion of
the 23rd Anniversary of
Their Independence

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