



***THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN  
TO THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM  
MISSIONS TO THE EUROPEAN UNION AND NATO***

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**Development of agriculture in Uzbekistan  
during the Years of Independence**

From the first days of Independence the Government of Uzbekistan has been implementing a coherent and comprehensive policy in agricultural sector aimed at ensuring food security. The approach based on the importance of fruits and vegetables production for the whole system of livelihood, maintaining the health of the population, as well as creation of employment opportunities has become one of the main vectors of economic and social policy in Uzbekistan.

An unprecedented decision of 1989 to allocate more than 400 thousand hectares of irrigated land for garden plots was among initial measures to radically change the approach for achieving food independence in Uzbekistan. Further steps on implementing the market and institutional reforms in agricultural sector included modification of sown areas structure and reduction of cotton cultivation for almost 2 times in favor of crops. As a result, Uzbekistan, previously imported more than 80% of the demand in grain, has gained “grain” independence, producing more than 7 million tons annually.

Other important vectors of the State policy in agricultural sector include:

- liquidation of state and collective farms in favor of private farms to ensure productivity growth based on modern agricultural technologies;
- diversification of sectors in agriculture, development of potato farming, viticulture, apiculture, poultry and fish production;
- expansion of preferential crediting system of agricultural production;
- establishing of an effective system of maintenance for farming enterprises, as well as supplies for their needs necessary material and technical resources (fuel, chemical fertilizers, biological and chemical pesticides, seeds);
- formation of logistics system for storage and transportation of agricultural products, as well as its industrial processing.

Development of farming is among top priorities. Currently, there are 67,804 farms in the country. The legal framework is established and being

coherently improved. In accordance with the Law “On farms” and Presidential Decree “On measures of further improving the organization of activities and development of farming in Uzbekistan”, the range of activities are undertaken with the aim to transform the farms – major producer of agricultural products, to a powerful social and political force capable to take responsibility for the further development of the agricultural and other sectors, as well as increase the level and quality of life.

During the short period of independent development, a major reforms are implemented in Uzbekistan, allowing to almost entirely diversify agricultural sector and provide population with main food crops, as well as establish large volumes of their export.

Since 1997, our agriculture demonstrates steady positive growth of 6-7% annually. Starting 1991, the volume of agricultural production has more than doubled, allowing to increase per capita consumption of meat by 1,3 times, milk and dairy products – 1,6 times, potatoes – 7 times, vegetables – more than 2 times, fruits – almost by 4 times. Currently, over 17 million tons of fruits and vegetables are produced in the country annually, constituting 300 kg of vegetables, 75 kg of potatoes and 44 kg of grapes. These figures are roughly three times higher than the average consumption rates.

The comprehensive measures helping to steadily increase the export potential of the industry. In recent years, Uzbekistan has become a major exporter of high quality and competitive fruit and vegetable products. In order to ensure year-round supply, a significant attention to the processing and storage is devoted. Over the past 10 years, the volume of processing of vegetables and grapes increased by 3.5 times, including the canned fruits and vegetables by 2.5 times, dried fruits – 4 times, natural juices – 7 times. More than 16% of total production of vegetables and grapes are processed. Currently, more than 180 types of fresh and processed fruit and vegetable products are exported. Its share in the structure of exports is 73%.

The geography of horticulture and viticulture exports is also expanding. Previously Uzbekistan traditionally supplied Russia, Kazakhstan and other CIS countries, whereas now it exports to the markets of more than 120 countries worldwide, including Indonesia, Norway, Mongolia, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, the USA, Thailand and Japan.

Since independence, there have also been positive changes in the water sector. Reclamation of irrigated lands, rational and careful use of scarce water resources, increase of soil fertility are among top priorities of the further development. Uzbekistan has managed not only to maintain its irrigation potential during the Years of Independence, but also successfully modernized and improved its irrigation system.

Principles of integrated water resources management, advanced water-saving technologies, automated monitoring and management of water distribution are being introduced. Measures to improve agricultural

diversification, the technical conditions of water facilities, irrigated land, and more are taken.

10 basin irrigation systems, 1502 associations of water users with about 70 thousand members are operating across the country since 2003 for effective management of water and water supply.

The state budget annually finances the renovation of more than 5 thousand kilometres of canals, while the water users cover the renovation of more than 100 thousand kilometres of irrigation and trough networks and 10 thousand units of various hydraulic structures. In recent years about 1.5 thousand kilometres of canals, more than 400 large hydrotechnic structures and 200 pumping stations were built and reconstructed in Uzbekistan.

A specialized fund for land reclamation was created in 2007. At the expense of this structure, the State Program of Land Reclamation in 2008-2012 has been developed and implemented.

More than \$ 500 million on the implementation of programs, including the construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation of drainage systems was spent.

During the period of 2008-2012 a special company “Uzmeliomashlizing” provided 1450 units of machinery, including 600 excavators, 180 bulldozers, 670 other mechanisms to the enterprises engaged in irrigation and reclamation activities on the terms of preferential leasing.

This document improved the condition of irrigated lands on the area of over 1 million 200 thousand hectares, provided optimum groundwater level, which has to a normal growth and development of crops. The area of land irrigated with groundwater level up to 2 meters decreased by 117.6 thousand hectares. The area with strongly and medium saline lands of 105.0 thousand hectares was desalted and reached the level of desalination of slightly saline and non-saline lands.

In order to further improve the reclamation and irrigation infrastructure the State Program on improvement of irrigated land and the rational use of water resources was established for the period of 2013 - 2017. More than \$ 1.2 billion were allocated for its implementation.

As part of the program 1771 km of drainage network has been built and reconstructed in 2013-2014, 24.7 thousand km of repair work has been carried out. 360 units of reclamation equipment were purchased in terms of reduced leasing. In addition, reclamation of irrigated lands on the area of over 1 million 700 thousand hectares was improved.

Special attention is paid to the development of water-saving irrigation technologies. Thus, in recent years drip irrigation has been implemented in over 16.3 hectares of area with an annual increase of 5 hectares. Watering by means of flexible hoses and through the film is already used on more than 18.7 hectares of land, mainly in the cotton fields.

Within the period from 2013 to 2017 land users and farmers at the

expense of the state will be provided with preferential long-term loans for the implementation of drip irrigation systems on the area of 25 hectares. Farmer unions which have implemented water-saving technologies in their activities are exempt from payment of land and other types of taxes for 5 years.

A great attention is paid to the improvement of water infrastructure by attracting foreign investment. Major projects with the participation of international financial institutions and partner countries are being realized.

Such projects as “drainage projects in Uzbekistan” worth \$ 74,550,000 have now been completed with the participation of the World Bank. Other projects include “Rehabilitation of the pumping station Kuyumazar” together with the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (cost - \$ 12 million.), “Rehabilitation of Karakul pumping station” with the assistance of Chinese investors (\$ 14 million).

In the period of 2009-2014 the first two phases of “German Water Initiative for Central Asia” have been successfully implemented. In particular its program “Transboundary Water Management” (TWRM), under which there was reconstruction of interdistrict channel “Bad Bad” (Samarkand region), river “Padshaata” (Namangan region) and its headwork. Also technical assistance was provided to the State Inspectorate for Control and Supervision of the technical condition and safety of the largest and most important water economy objects under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Gosvodkhoznadzor), State Enterprise “Botiometrik Markaz”, Zarafshan basin management of irrigation systems and to the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

The projects “Restoration of the main irrigation canals Tashsakinskoy of Khorezm region” with the participation of the Islamic Development Bank (\$ 144.2 million.) are being continued. Together with France the program “Rehabilitation of pumping stations Navoi and Uchkara” (\$ 38.26 million.) is planned will be started. The Asian Development Bank, in turn, allocated \$284,460,000 for the restoration of the Amu Bukhara Irrigation System.

In the near future the implementation of two other major projects is planned – “Improving the management of water resources in Southern Karakalpakstan” with the financial assistance of the World Bank and “Improving the management of water resources in the Surkhandarya region” in cooperation with the Islamic Development Bank.

As a result of systematic measures water intake throughout the country, compared to 1990 decreased from 62 to 51 billion cubic meters (21%) per annum. Specific withdrawal of the sources for the irrigation for one hectare area was reduced from 18 thousand cubic meters per hectare to 10.5 thousand cubic meters per hectare (42%).