



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

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**ISLAM KARIMOV ADDRESSES WITH CONGRATULATORY  
SPEECH AT INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS**

*President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov has delivered a greeting speech at the festive ceremony to celebrate the 24th anniversary of national independence.*



Dear compatriots!

Distinguished guests!

Today I feel immensely happy and honored to welcome you, my dear ones, in this gorgeous and awe-inspiring square, and from the bottom of my heart to congratulate all of you, and in your person our entire nation, on our greatest and dearest holiday – the Independence

Day of Uzbekistan.

The independence is a great event for us, which has entirely changed the meaning and essence of our life and opened up a new page in our history. The independence is valued and revered by us as it has liberated our Homeland and our people from the chains of old despotic regime, paved way to establishing a national democratic state and building a prosperous life, being equal to all countries and nations.

It is the independence that will remain forever in our history since it has allowed us to restore our trampled down values, faith and religion, honor and conscience, to realize our identity and build our future that caters to the dreams and aspirations of our people and our national interests.

It is thanks to the independence and owing to the selfless endeavors of our courageous and steadfast people that within a historically short period of time, our

towns, villages and entire country have been flourishing and prospering, while the living standards and quality of life of our people been raising and today our Uzbekistan is a modern, dynamically advancing state. My dear friends and compatriots, please tell me, would we be able to achieve such results, hard even to imagine, without gaining independence?

There is a firm answer to this question, which is: No, definitely no.

It is not difficult to see and observe the vivid confirmation of these words, above all, in the path that we have passed and the strides made by our country.

Surely, no one can remain indifferent to the fact that despite the ongoing global economic crisis, during the years of independence Uzbekistan's economy has grown more than 5,5 times, the real per capita income increased 9 times, while life expectancy has climbed from 67 up to 73 years, equaling 75 years among women.

Today our country ranks fifth among the fastest developing states in the world and during the last 11 years our gross domestic product growth rate has been demonstrating 8 percent in the least. It is natural that the aforementioned facts draw everyone's admiration and delight.

At present, according to the latest data by the world's most prestigious economic and social centers, in the Happy Planet Index, Uzbekistan ranks 44th among 158 nations and is second to no one in the Commonwealth of Independent States. And this fact makes all of us proud and calls on to reach the new horizons.

To be sure, we can endlessly speak of the achieved growth rates, secured frontiers and reasons that made them possible. However, while expounding on this, it is worth noting that there is a crucial factor and criterion of our enormous successes: and it is, to name but a few, the expanding world outlook, conscience and mindset, legal awareness and political activeness, the sense of civic responsibility and duty of our people.

Crucially, since the early days of independence we have established a new system completely free of clichés and dogmas of the old regime and aimed at nurturing a young generation as a force with independent thinking, new view of life and is capable of great accomplishments.

Annually, over 600 thousand young specialists who meet the modern requirements are entering the mature life in our country. This is the youth who mastered at least two or three professions, foreign languages, the internet and information technologies, summits of modern knowledge, as well as stand ready to compete with their peers in the developed countries. These are our sons and daughters with sparkling eyes who are now turning into a truly decisive power of our society.

The nation, which has such a young generation who are our solid buttress and stronghold, the nation with such an unmatched potential can never be turned back from its path and can never be defeated. We are all confident about this.

Dear friends!

Dear compatriots!

It is an open secret that in building life in our country, which would be appropriate and suitable for ourselves, we did not allow for haste, short-sightedness, careless and slapdash work.

Unlike others, we abstained from joining the races for indicators. We did not copy others and kept ourselves away from short-sighted «advisors».

Crucially as it is, we did not look at our destiny and our future light-mindedly, and were not mesmerized by loans offered and thus have not run into debts.

In a word, we have indeed practiced the principle «The reforms are not for the sake of reforms, but for human interests». To accomplish our goal, we have strictly adhered to the path of step-by-step and evolutionary progress.

**The elaboration and implementation of the profoundly thought-out strategic program of development, based on the well-known five principles and now acclaimed in the world as the Uzbek Model, will definitely leave an indelible trace in our history.**

Dear friends!

I believe that all of us are well aware of our kind dreams and aspirations along the path of achieving our supreme goal, i.e. to join the ranks of developed countries, ensure the decent standards and quality of life for our people and win a high respect and recognition in the international community.

Along with this, all of us well know that the 21st century, the rapidly developing processes of globalization, intellectual labor and deep penetration of the Internet into our life, the ever growing scales, intensity and ruthlessness of competition in the world market are setting an extremely important and urgent requirements before any state and any nation.

Today, unless anyone and any state follows those harsh requirements and lives in harmony with them, undoubtedly, such a state will inevitably be left in the periphery of global progress.

I believe I will express the opinion of our entire nation, if I say that we have no right whatsoever to allow this in Uzbekistan.

In this regard, our main task is to increase the competitiveness of our economy through further deepening the reforms underway in our country, modernizing and renewal of our economy and its branches, **extensive introduction of information and communication systems, and thus secure a deserving niche in the world market.**

At present, the implementation of policy of **structural changes in the economy, diversification of the industry**, establishment of new production lines and creation of new jobs based on advanced technologies must be our utmost priority and the most urgent task.

All of us must deeply realize that to further develop the sphere of private property and private entrepreneurship enshrined in our Constitution, **today the life itself requires that we grant this sphere a complete freedom, remove all obstacles and restrictions that hinder it, reduce the share of state in our economy to a justified level.**

Dear friends!

Nowadays, if we look at our near and far neighborhood, we cannot but see the escalation of various confrontations and tensions, clashes and bloodshed, conflicts and hostilities, in short, the situation becomes extremely dangerous and acquires yet more complex and tense character.

In this tremendously threatening situation our current policy envisages the following: compliance with the basic principles stipulated in the United Nations Charter, international laws and norms; **addressing the unfolding confrontations and conflicts not by using force, but only with peaceful and political means: unconditional ceasing of wars and bloodshed that continue today across various regions of the world.**

I believe it is necessary to stress it time and again: **Uzbekistan will not join any military and political blocs, will absolutely not allow for deploying foreign military bases in its territory and not let our servicemen abroad.** We consider these principles, elevated to the level of the state law of Uzbekistan, such a deeply elaborated path and this very policy to be the most correct and most suitable for us, and we will never turn back from this course.

**As I have asserted before, what we need is peace and harmony. That is the wish of the Uzbek people. That is the objective of the Uzbek people. That is the decision of the Uzbek people.**

The time we are now experiencing requires from all of us to live alert and vigilant, struggle for our peaceful and soothing life, safeguard our clear sky.

For this purpose, we consider as our priority task to find a common language with our near and far neighbors, further strengthen the mutually friendly relations, cooperation and accord in our region.

Availing myself of this opportunity, allow me to sincerely welcome the ambassadors of foreign countries and representatives of international organizations, who closely render us support and assistance, offer the hand of cooperation and always show their goodwill, as well as all our guests from abroad who have joined us in this festivity today.

My dear compatriots!

I wish we never forget one truth. During the 24 years of our independent development we have achieved enormous successes, our life is becoming more flourishing and prosperous, and we see how our people are getting more pleased with their lives. **In the core of these achievements there is a selfless work, wisdom, astuteness and firm will of our people who have been preserving peace and tranquility, carefully safeguarding such aspirations from the old times as an apple of an eye – in a word, those who bring up our young generation in this very spirit.**

Today, standing on this high rostrum, on behalf of you, my dears, and on behalf of myself, I believe it is my duty and obligation to bow low before our diligent, magnanimous and noble people.

I wish happiness and well-being, plenty and abundance to the homes of our most beautiful and kindest women and sisters in the world who illuminate our families and lives with the ray of virtue and love.

Once again, I would like to express my sincere reverence and deep confidence to you – the youth who have gathered in this magnificent square, and through you, to all sons and daughters of our country, my dear children.

I am confident that thanks to the strength, inspiration and steadfastness so much peculiar to you, by constant sought, by mastering the modern knowledge and skills, all of you will certainly achieve the noble aspirations of yours, secure a praiseworthy and firm place in our society.

**Never give up, my dear children! The future is yours!**

My esteemed compatriots!

In these exciting and unforgettable moments, I am happy to once again congratulate you on the 24th anniversary of independence of our Motherland and extend my most heartfelt and sincerest wishes.

May Almighty support and help us in all our gracious endeavors!

May our country be peaceful, our skies clear and our people safe and sound!

May our independence be eternal!