



New Uzbekistan and Political Reform: The Role of National Strategies In Strengthening Governance

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DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.47134/par.v2i2.3453>

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Received: 23-12-2024

Accepted: 23-01-2025

Published: 22-02-2025



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Abstract: This article analyzes the significance of key national development strategies that have played a crucial role in shaping Uzbekistan's state policy, namely the "2017-2021 Action Strategy," the "2022-2026 Development Strategy," and the "Uzbekistan – 2030 Strategy." The study examines how these strategies contribute to democratic development, judicial and legal reforms, economic growth, and social progress. Additionally, the article highlights the principles of "transparency and accountability in governance, the protection of human rights, the eradication of forced labor, and the outcomes of judicial reforms." These development plans create foundations to establish New Uzbekistan, elevated public welfare, and efficient state administration through progressive reform initiatives.

Keywords: Development Strategy, Transparency, Governance, Reforms, Political Progress, Society, Public Administration, Judicial System, E-Governance, Citizen, Democracy, Human Rights

Introduction

By 2017, Uzbekistan had laid the foundation for aligning its state policy with global development trends through the adoption of the Action Strategy. Under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev the strategic initiative became the backbone of democratic transformations and political renewal and radical changes throughout Uzbekistan.

The fundamental examination of this development strategy for Uzbekistan's political environment requires an initial definition of the strategic concept. Through its pivotal role the Action Strategy has developed Uzbekistan's governance system which promotes transparency and accountability while modernizing institutions to drive political and economic advancement.

In its original usage strategy emerged from the fusion of two Greek words meaning "army" (stratus) and "to lead" (ago) while strategia became the term utilized in military environments to develop victory-winning tactical processes against enemies. Sun Tzu (544-496 BCE) defined strategic principles by saying: "A general must have wisdom together with integrity and benevolence alongside courage and determination."

As an idea that started in military operations strategy has transformed into an essential principle that guides nations in achieving their enduring political goals and establishing broad governing plans through state policy. A political strategy functions as a driving force to lead nations through unsure situations toward stability with development which ensures institutional steadiness and direct management. In this context, Uzbekistan's development strategies function as political tools that strengthen national sovereignty, democratic governance, and economic resilience in the modern era.

Methodology

The research conducts an extensive evaluation of Uzbekistan's development plans with special attention given to three main strategies: the Action Strategy of 2017-2021 and 2022-2026 Development Strategy and "Uzbekistan – 2030" Strategy. The research methodology includes philosophical-theoretical analysis coupled with systematic data evaluation and methodological comparison to study these development plans critically. This investigation puts major importance on evaluating reforms which take place across multiple critical domains including governance systems and human rights protection as well as economic approaches and social advancement plans. The strategic analysis of reform implementation shows Uzbekistan's development of democratic systems and social political evolution.

The study determines how these strategies support Uzbekistan's pursuit of sustainable development through improved international connectivity within the framework of New Uzbekistan. The study deeply examines the link between these strategies together with major modernization features which include efficient governance structures and political system adjustments. The research evaluates Uzbekistan's development plans by assessing their performance in domestic advancement and their capability to meet international standards while providing an extensive overview of the country's modernization and international presence.

Result and Discussion

The Action Strategy for the Further Development of Uzbekistan effectively reflected the key development factors, socio-political needs, and national priorities of the country from 2017 to 2021. Following the Presidential Decree of February 7, 2017, the adoption of the Action Strategy played a crucial role in the renewal of political thought and governance in Uzbekistan.

This development strategy was designed as a systematic and structured framework consisting of three key components to transform the political consciousness of society:

- Strategic Goal – Ensuring the comprehensive development of Uzbekistan.
- Strategic Direction – Implementing the five priority areas of Uzbekistan's national development.

The five key areas benefit from Strategic Actions which represent established policies and operational measures. The strategy offered political perspectives that outlined

modernization directions and supported democratic practices and economic transformation along with stronger institutional transparency in the process of turning Uzbekistan into its new form.

The extensive alterations in Uzbekistan categorized into five areas have produced major societal adjustments through transformations of state administration and public system together with judicial procedures along with economic and political designs for nation-building alongside religious acceptance. Understanding political governance in Uzbekistan underwent fundamental restructuring during the five years from 2017 to 2021 when a new transparent government system combined with citizen-driven accountability emerged.

The major accomplishments of governance along with political reforms include:

Citizen Engagement in Governance

The introduction of direct public communication mechanisms through the establishment of the Presidential Virtual and People's Reception Offices facilitated government accountability.

From 2017 to 2021, over six million appeals were submitted, with three million cases successfully resolved. The "Mahalla – Sector – People's Reception – Mahalla" system was introduced to address socio-economic issues at the grassroots level.'

Enhancing Transparency and Accountability in State Administration. Reforms in public administration focused on eliminating bureaucracy, ensuring transparency, and strengthening institutional accountability.

The government prioritized digital transformation and efficiency in public services, leading to the establishment of the Public Services Center and the introduction of 250 types of digital services via the my.gov.uz portal.

These reforms improved the political management system because they deepened democratic practices while raising the involvement of citizens in national choices and improving institutional operations. The Action Strategy (2017-2021) provided the foundation to modernize Uzbekistan's governance through citizen-oriented policies combined with digital efficiencies and administrative streamlining essential for New Uzbekistan's sustainability (Unified Portal Mission).

The parliamentary system of Uzbekistan experienced substantial changes which strengthened the Oliy Majlis's (Supreme Assembly) influence on state and public decision-making. A major political advancement accomplished the creation of "Government Hour" to monitor executive bodies directly thus improving both transparency and legislative accountability.

Uzbekistan achieved a landmark progression when it passed the Election Code because this code implemented standardized democratic election processes resulting in transparent elections. The establishment of the Ecological Party showed Uzbekistan's dedication to introduce more diverse political parties into the multi-party system framework. Another critical reform was the expansion of voting rights, allowing individuals convicted of minor or low-risk offenses to participate in elections. This step reinforced

political inclusivity and democratic values, ensuring that greater segments of the population are involved in shaping national policies. These reforms highlight Uzbekistan's commitment to strengthening democracy, ensuring civic engagement, and building a politically progressive society (Rajabova, 2021).

Overall, the efficiency of the reforms implemented in state and public administration has been highly regarded both domestically and internationally. Excellence in transforming politics and the economy earned Uzbekistan the distinction of "Country of the Year" from "The Economist" in 2019.

Digital governance in Uzbekistan reached an impressive ranking as it secured the 87th position in the United Nations E-Government Development Index. The government demonstrates dedication through this achievement by showing determination to transform public administration and improve digital transparency and establish strong e-governance frameworks.

The international recognition demonstrates Uzbekistan's capabilities in implementing political and administrative reforms through which it positions itself as both a new democratic power and a governance leader in the region (Results of the Action Strategy on Five Priority Directions for the Development of Uzbekistan).

Uzbekistan has advanced substantially through its work to strengthen the rule of law together with its judicial system reforms. A set of complete legal and judicial reforms brought the country to a point where its judicial system became more fair and transparent while securing justice for every citizen. One of the most notable political achievements in human rights and freedoms was the complete eradication of forced labor. This reform reflects Uzbekistan's commitment to upholding international human rights standards and reinforcing the principles of justice and the rule of law.

These legal transformations not only enhance judicial independence but also contribute to Uzbekistan's democratic consolidation, strengthening public trust in the legal system and ensuring greater accountability in governance (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 349, 2018). Strengthening Human Rights and Legal Protections in Uzbekistan

The government of Uzbekistan continues to advance both legally and politically through human rights protections which target child labor and forced labor problems. An addition of criminal penalties targeting individuals who force children into labor work enhanced both legal responsibility and accountability. The Parliamentary Commissioner for Children's Rights (Children's Ombudsman) and the National Commission on Child Affairs received institutional powers to reinforce human rights protection within the country. Uzbekistan further supported its dedication to global human rights standards by adopting International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions against Child and Forced Labor.

Through integrating international human rights protection mechanisms Uzbekistan achieved greater national and international credibility while improving its international reputation. Uzbekistan won its first place on the UN Human Rights Council through a three-year term which represented a significant diplomatic achievement. A "For the Protection of Human Rights" medal was established at the Academy of the Prosecutor General's Office

where a Master's program in International Human Rights Law existed together with PhD and DSc specializations in Human Rights (12.00.13) (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 685, 2020).

Uzbekistan achieves better international cooperation through human rights reforms along with enhanced cultural dialogue and improved foreign investment attraction. Protecting prisoners' dignity together with their legal rights stands as a central goal for reform measures. A significant national progress occurred when the infamous Jasliq Penal Colony No. 19 officially shut its doors in 2019 based on the Action Strategy for National Development. The closure of exclusively male detention facilities allowed Uzbekistan to improve its international reputation and prove its reform-oriented character on the global stage [8.51]. The nation's commitment to enhance criminal justice through a humanitarian approach led to the closing of two more prisons in addition to Jasliq Penal Colony No. 19 in 2019. These modern penal measures enacted during that brief period led to a dramatic reduction of prisoners by fifty percent [9.8]. Additionally, public monitoring groups were established under the Ombudsman's Office to detect and prevent cases of torture, reinforcing the country's commitment to human rights and legal transparency.

The national development strategy framework has enabled Uzbekistan to advance major achievements in strengthening legal systems and protecting human rights and judicial reforms. The country's democratic transformation reached a significant political milestone because these measures delivered better legal freedom protections in addition to fair and impartial justice services.

The nation of Uzbekistan has accomplished notable success in economic development by implementing steps to liberate currency markets and linking its economy to national and international networks and implementing reduced government regulation and enhancing business competition. Major reforms included modernization of agriculture while simultaneously providing incentives to small enterprises and private businesses alongside the development of a strong market competition.

The national currency of Uzbekistan became fully convertible through so'm currency on September 5th 2017 which established a free exchange rate system. The financial accessibility of citizens improved significantly due to the establishment of automated currency exchange kiosks which allowed cash withdrawals in foreign currency at commercial banks. This advancement brought greater market transparency.

Uzbekistan's budget and taxation system adopted a new approach of reform through the implementation of the Action Strategy.

The Action Strategy implemented nine new tax types by reducing the total from 13 and conducted three examinations instead of previous tax inspections which numbered 13.

The personal income tax system became more efficient through its standardization at 12% which simplified operations.

Uzbekistan gained both economic advantages and trade preference through implementing The European Union's Special Incentive Arrangement for Sustainable Development and Good Governance (GSP+). The nation's shift toward market-driven

economy matches its broader political transformation as well as its progress toward becoming democratic [10.12].

One of the key achievements of Uzbekistan's development strategy has been the improvement of business conditions, the liberalization of entrepreneurial activity, and the expansion of support mechanisms for businesses. Over five years, nearly 2,000 laws, decrees, and resolutions were adopted to foster business growth and economic competitiveness.

Key Business Reforms and Policy Changes:

- The elimination of unnecessary and alternative inspection systems, reducing bureaucratic barriers for businesses.
- Simplification of business registration, licensing, and permit processes, making it easier for entrepreneurs to operate.
- Development of key economic sectors, including tourism, energy production, and agriculture, driving national economic expansion.

Tourism was granted strategic sector status, with comprehensive reforms aimed at boosting domestic and pilgrimage tourism. As a result of these efforts, Uzbekistan's tourism industry has gained international recognition. Uzbekistan holds the fourth position globally for its rapid growth in tourism economies based on United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) data.

The political effect of these reforms establishes benefits for both economic sustainability and Uzbekistan's connection to the global economy. The country continues to attract business growth and investment by implementing free-market policies and reducing state interventions and strengthening economic institutions which supports its democratic and market-centered governance system [11.64]. The New York Times recognized Uzbekistan as one of its top 52 chosen travel locations worldwide in 2019 (52 Places to Go in 2019). The country of Uzbekistan experienced major progress in information technology development thus starting digital transformation throughout its economic sectors. The "Digital Uzbekistan – 2030" Strategy received adoption as a strategic document on October 5, 2020 leading to systematic implementation of digital transformation in different sectors (Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-6079, 2020).

Through its robust social policies Uzbekistan moves its market reform model forward to establish economic development with equal priorities to social welfare advancement. The government has implemented key reforms throughout income regulation and employment and labor relations and social protection as well as healthcare education and sports sectors to produce major social progress.

Rising wages and expanded social protection have improved the well-being of low-income and vulnerable families, fostering their active participation in the socio-economic life of the country.

Job creation and workforce development have been prioritized, leading to the establishment of:

- 16 “Ishga Marhamat” (Welcome to Work) mono-centers
- 27 vocational training centers
- 136 neighborhood-based skills training institutions
- Three vocational training centers established in partnership with the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

Through their joint initiatives human capital increased thereby creating positions for workforce employment and new population skills development and workforce competitiveness. In terms of politics Uzbekistan supports social policy transformation because it joins wide governance approaches that ensure economic steadiness and social inclusivity while pushing sustainable development to strengthen its future socio-political evolution [14.15]. Progress in both social protection mechanisms and inclusivity enhancement has been made recently.

The government dedicated special focus to raising social protection levels and developing support systems for disadvantaged groups. Key measures include:

Working pensioners will now receive their complete pensions as an increase occurred in the maximum payment amount from 8 times to 10 times the Basic Calculation Value (BHM).

The state budget for social protection should receive a doubling amount of funding to increase financial assistance for low-income populations.

Implementing targeted social assistance programs through the “Iron Notebook”, “Women’s Notebook”, and “Youth Notebook” initiatives, which provide employment opportunities and tax incentives for self-employed individuals.

The consistent implementation of the Action Strategy has also strengthened friendship, solidarity, and religious tolerance among various ethnic and religious communities in Uzbekistan. A major milestone in this regard was the adoption of the UN General Assembly resolution on “Enlightenment and Religious Tolerance” on December 12, 2018, a key initiative proposed by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev during the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly.

Further reinforcing Uzbekistan’s commitment to interethnic harmony, the government declared July 30 as the “Day of Friendship Among Nations” and established the “Khalklar dostligi” state medal. The reforms demonstrate Uzbekistan’s political drive to establish unity through an inclusive society that promotes harmony while ensuring long-term social conditions.

The Action Strategy supports Uzbekistan's systematic work for environmental protection as well as rational resource management and ecological condition enhancement efforts. The government has directed its efforts toward environmental responsibility development and the spread of ecological knowledge among people because they understood the environmental challenges that face our world.

The State Program for the Development of the Aral Sea Region between 2017 and 2021 focused on restoring the departed region while combating ecological problems in the area. Through the United Nations the Trust Fund for Human Security in Aral Sea Region serves as a central body to coordinate humanitarian work together with international support. To reduce the impact of sandstorms and dust pollution, large-scale projects were launched to create protective green belts and afforestation programs in the dried-up areas of the Aral Sea. These efforts have significantly contributed to improving living conditions for communities in the Aral region, demonstrating Uzbekistan's commitment to sustainable development and environmental governance.

From a political perspective, these initiatives reflect Uzbekistan's strategic vision for ecological security, positioning the country as a regional leader in environmental policy and sustainable development.

The 2022-2026 Development Strategy follows in natural succession to the 2017-2021 Action Strategy to achieve the construction of New Uzbekistan. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has underlined that constructing New Uzbekistan represents an essential objective beyond personal sentiment or free will due to present political-legal and socio-economic conditions. The plan exists as a necessary objective because it originates from the historical foundations that align with the political-legal and socio-economic and cultural-educational conditions present in the country. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev stated that "OvUzbekiston Yangi Shi in its entirety supports the aspirations of our nation and advances their national interests" [15.3]. Uzbekistan demonstrates its dedication to wide-ranging transformations through this political method because it wants to reinforce democratic systems and advance social fairness and build sustainable development solutions. The mission of New Uzbekistan extends beyond economic success and efficient governance to establish a nation through historical ties alongside legal advancements and fulfilled citizen dreams.

The political awareness of a population needs fundamental changes in order to accomplish sustainable development. There is a clear requirement for immediate political mindset evolution as Uzbekistan begins its path toward next level development.

Society together with state governance underwent fundamental transformation from 2017-2021 through reforms dedicated to creating a contemporary democratic identity of Uzbekistan. These reforms have established a marked rise in public confidence toward political change because citizens are interested in reaping the advantages of these reforms. After recognizing widespread momentum toward people-friendly measures the government implemented "From the Action Strategy to the Development Strategy" as the foundational principle for 2022-2023 when unprecedented changes in governance took place.

Seven priority areas define the essential foundation that drives Uzbekistan towards long-term national development in this strategic transition. Through these reforms Uzbekistan demonstrates its dedication to create a resilient forward-thinking state by advancing democratic governance together with legal modernization and socio-political advancement.

During 2022-2023, the people of Uzbekistan united their strength and efforts to implement key reforms, achieve strategic objectives, and elevate the country to the ranks of the world's most developed nations. These priorities unite the nation in successfully executing reforms in practice.

These reforms materialized because of the dedicated pursuit of national experience and national determination over the past five years during the implementation of the Development Strategy. The acquired national experience successfully became part of the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for maintaining government stability alongside continuous political development and national progress. The reforms demonstrate Uzbekistan's commitment to build robust democratic systems and economic stability while aiming to lead international development initiatives.

Based on these constructive objectives, the year 2022 was declared in Uzbekistan as the "Year of Honoring Human Dignity and an Active Neighborhood" (*Inson qadrini ulug'lash va faol mahalla yili*). Within this framework, the State Program for Implementing the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy (2022-2026) was developed to align policy reforms with the principles of human dignity and grassroots community engagement.

To ensure broad public participation, over 15,000 proposals and recommendations were submitted by citizens and civil society organizations during the drafting of the Presidential Decree on the "Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan (2022-2026)" and its 2022 Roadmap. This inclusive governance approach underscores Uzbekistan's commitment to transparent policymaking, participatory democracy, and people-centered reforms, strengthening the country's political modernization and institutional development (Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-60, 2022). Political Engagement and the Roadmap for Uzbekistan's Future

This active civic participation reflects the transformation of society's worldview, the evolution of public consciousness, and the rise of political engagement and responsibility among citizens. It demonstrates that Uzbekistan's people-centered reforms are guided by clear strategic goals, strong political will, and a well-structured social policy.

A historic milestone in this process was the nationwide referendum held on April 30, 2023, where the new edition of the Constitution of Uzbekistan was adopted through popular vote. This constitutional reform laid the foundation for the country's next phase of development, reinforcing Uzbekistan's commitment to democratic governance and legal modernization.

The "Uzbekistan – 2030" Strategy defines the country's short- and medium-term development trends, outlining key priorities for sustainable progress. A core principle of this strategy is ensuring the continuity and consistency of reforms, further integrating long-term economic, political, legal, and cultural transformations. As a comprehensive roadmap, this document holds critical importance for enhancing the country's socio-economic and political-legal framework, bringing Uzbekistan's reform agenda to the next stage of progress.

The new edition of Uzbekistan's Constitution served as a key foundation for Presidential Decree on the "Uzbekistan – 2030 Strategy", signed by President Shavkat

Mirziyoyev on September 11, 2023. Additionally, it provided a legal and strategic basis for the Resolution on Ensuring the Effective and Timely Implementation of the “Uzbekistan – 2030” Strategy in 2023. This highlights the Constitution’s pivotal role in guiding long-term national development, reinforcing governance reforms, and ensuring the continuity of Uzbekistan’s transformation agenda (President Shavkat Mirziyoyev’s Speech at the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 2023). The “Uzbekistan – 2030” Strategy is fully aligned with the national goals and objectives of sustainable development, serving as a comprehensive roadmap for its implementation. It would not be an exaggeration to say that this strategy acts as a “roadmap” for Uzbekistan’s long-term progress.

Adopted on a strong legal foundation, the “Uzbekistan – 2030” Development Strategy is also in harmony with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As President Shavkat Mirziyoyev stated, “We are fully and firmly fulfilling all the commitments we have undertaken” (Sobirovich, 2023). This underscores Uzbekistan’s dedication to responsible governance, policy consistency, and sustainable national development.

The “Uzbekistan – 2030” Strategy, which outlines five key areas and 100 specific goals, is the result of accumulated experience, achievements, and broad public discussions gained during the implementation of previous development strategies. Such inclusivity confirms this policy’s position as an exceptional national document for implementing a comprehensive approach to governance that revolves around people.

The strategic vision works toward raising Uzbekistan’s position to upper-middle-income standing by the next seven years while maintaining sturdy economic expansion together with leading education quality alongside medical excellence and social defense frameworks at world-class levels. The Indian National Movement strategy establishes the foundation for building an environmentally friendly and habitable society while protecting national security alongside establishing a welfare-oriented modern state and safeguarding national sovereignty.

Political operations in Uzbekistan benefit from the “Uzbekistan – 2030” Strategy which provides a governing system that maintains consistent policies through institutional changes and ensures lasting national equilibrium. Economic modernization combined with social justice and democratic governance through this strategy makes Uzbekistan more powerful as a state while improving its international position and fostering ongoing progressive reform which supports its vision for a prosperous sovereign nation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, The state development strategies of Uzbekistan have reshaped the nation’s political realm by establishing public confidence in upcoming years and demanding responsible execution of national planning agendas. These political approaches have both defined public awareness patterns and strengthened democratic governance structures and institutional openness and citizen involvement processes.

These initial framework successes demonstrate quickened national advancement which creates better prospects and selects new avenues of growth for Uzbekistan’s citizens

and its development trajectory. These policies remain vital at both national and international levels because they bridge Uzbekistan's development with global sustainable targets while ensuring governmental best practices.

Such a forward-thinking political approach helps Uzbekistan to build better relations with the world and create an image of an advanced state dedicated to modern reforms. Time and again the strategy continues to upgrade human dignity together with social justice and economic inclusivity as New Uzbekistan develops into a democratic progressive nation.

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