

The Constitution is the guarantor of citizens' environmental rights



These days, we are widely celebrating the Constitution Day of the Republic of Uzbekistan in our country. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev addressed the people with a congratulatory message, noting the achievements in the political, social, and economic spheres of the state.

Separately, the Head of state focused on environmental protection issues, strengthening the state's responsibility for its preservation. Indeed, the renewed Basic Law, for the first time, enshrined the environmental rights of citizens and highlighted the state's obligations to protect the environment and maintain the ecological balance.

This, in particular, was reflected in Article 49, according to which the state, in accordance with the principle of sustainable development, implements measures to improve, restore, and protect the environment and maintain the ecological balance.

It must be admitted that in recent years, the state has taken unprecedented measures to ensure citizens' environmental rights.

First, the legislative and regulatory framework has expanded and continues to strengthen. Thus, environmental issues and water conservation were identified as separate priority areas of the Uzbekistan 2030 National Strategy for the first time. The foundations of the state policy of Uzbekistan in ecology were updated, which was reflected in the Concept of Environmental Protection until 2030, the Concept of Water Management Development for 2020-2030, the Strategy for the Development of Agriculture for 2020-2030, the Strategy for the Transition to a Green Economy for 2019-2030, the Strategy for the Conservation of Biodiversity for 2019-2028 and others.

To ensure the practical implementation of these programs and for the development of agriculture and water management, energy, environmental protection, etc., more than 20 official documents have been

adopted, which provide for more than 150 measures aimed at the green transformation of the economy. Work is also underway to adopt the Water and Environmental Codes.

Second, institutional reforms are being carried out. In 2023, the Ministry of Natural Resources was established based on the State Committee for Ecology and Environmental Protection, which was later transformed into the Ministry of Ecology, Environment and Climate Change, due to the expansion of the tasks and functions assigned to it. Currently, the Ministry of Ecology is the authorized body for implementing state management of activities in ecology, environmental protection, rational use of natural resources, and restoration.

The fact that priority attention is given to environmental issues is also confirmed by the establishment of the Climate Council under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the main tasks of which are defined as 1) the formation of a unified state policy to mitigate the effects of climate change and adapt to it and coordination of ministries and agencies in this direction; 2) monitoring the fulfillment of Uzbekistan's obligations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement; 3) determining the priorities of foreign policy to mitigate the effects of climate change and adapt to it; 4) improving the regulatory framework, etc.

Third, the system of improving eco-education and eco-culture is being improved. Thus, in 2019, the country's transition to a green economy, the Concept for the Development of Environmental Education was approved. Its main goal is to form environmental knowledge, consciousness, and culture in the younger generation and improve environmental science with the involvement of innovative technologies.

For these purposes, the subjects "Natural Sciences" and "Nature Studies" were introduced in primary schools, which instill in children a love for nature, a sense of responsibility, and the need to take care of the environment from an early age. In 2023, as part of measures to transform the sphere of ecology and environmental protection, the Central Asian University of Environmental Studies and Climate Change - Green University was established.

Thus, today, we can already observe some positive achievements in Uzbekistan's environmental policy based on the principles enshrined in the Constitution. However, the country will still need to continue further transformations to improve the situation.

In this context, as President Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted, the declaration of 2025 as the Year of Environmental Protection and the Green Economy should serve as an important basis for implementing the relevant constitutional norms and principles.

Lobar Umarova,

Chief Researcher, Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan