

# Leading global peacemakers to attend the First Fergana Peace Forum in Uzbekistan



## UNITING EFFORTS FOR PEACE AND PROGRESS

OCTOBER 15-16

Some of the world's leading peacemakers and conflict resolution experts will gather in Fergana, Uzbekistan, next week for a forum supported by the UN, SCO, CICA, CIS, and the EU. The event will highlight the success of peacebuilding efforts in Central Asia's Fergana Valley, once a hotbed of conflict.

The Fergana Valley is a vast, ethnically and culturally diverse cross-border region encompassing Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, where, after a period of complex disagreements, an atmosphere of mutual understanding and good-neighborliness has been restored.

The Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies (ISRS) under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan will host the first Fergana Peace Forum, in cooperation with the Center for Progressive Reforms, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the Peacebuilding Hub.

Entitled "Fergana Valley: Uniting Efforts for Peace and Progress" the Forum is organized in partnership with the National Institute for Strategic Initiatives under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, and Institute of studying of the problems of Asian and European countries of the National Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan.

At the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly, the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, underlined that "the era of closed borders, unresolved disputes and conflicts in Central Asia has receded into the past. In recent years, the volume of mutual trade, investment and transport flows in our region has increased fivefold. Joint investment funds, cross-border trade and industrial cooperation zones are being established, while major infrastructure projects are under implementation."

The President of Uzbekistan underlined that the process of building a New Central Asia is underway. With its unity, stability and strengthening regional identity, the region is consolidating its position in the international system as a distinct and independent actor.

"Peace in Fergana Valley has been made possible by strong commitments in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and by the diverse communities who have transformed differences into strength. The First Peace Forum on Fergana Valley will showcase how this political resolve and communities' bond could usher

peace,” said Eldor Aripov, Director of ISRS.

More than 300 international participants from Central Asia, Europe and America are expected to attend the two-day Forum. The event is expected to issue a Communiqué that calls for the creation of a shared space of friendship, good-neighborly relations, and sustainable development for the people of the Fergana Valley.

Among the high-level guests are Head of the UNRCCA Kaha Imnadze, European Union Special Representative for Central Asia Eduards Stiprais, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre Kate Fearon, Secretary-General of CICA Kairat Sarybay and Deputy Secretary-General of the SCO Sohail Khan.

Leading international peacebuilding institutions such as Berghof Foundation (Germany), the Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation (Finland), the PeaceNexus Foundation (Switzerland), and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) will also be at the Forum. Reflecting a commitment to be inclusive, the Forum will also draw participation from youth, women groups and the academia circle.

The Forum aims to create a standing platform for promoting dialogue, mutual trust, good-neighborly relations, and for developing a shared strategy for the development of the Fergana Valley.

Discussions will focus on strengthening stability and boosting sustainable development in the Fergana Valley which in turn will unleash the region’s economic potential. Participants will also discuss ways to bolster cultural and humanitarian ties, and expanding the role of the private sector, youth, and civil society.

The Forum will see the first observation of the “Yntymak Day” (“Day of Unity”) which celebrates the unity in diversity spirit of communities in Fergana Valley.