

Akramjon Nematov: “Regional Alignment of Strategies Is a Key Factor in the Sustainable Modernisation of Central Asia”



The remarks were made by Akramjon Nematov, First Deputy Director of the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies (ISRS), at a roundtable discussion on “Political Modernisation in Kazakhstan: Reforms, Public Demand and the Regional Context” held on 27 January in Tashkent.

The event, organised by the Embassy of Kazakhstan in Uzbekistan, was attended by heads of diplomatic missions from Central Asia, Azerbaijan and Russia, as well as representatives of Uzbekistan’s parliamentary, expert and academic communities.

According to Akramjon Nematov, the key narrative consistently advanced by Kazakhstan’s leadership is the concept of comprehensive modernisation, encompassing the transformation of public consciousness, state institutions and the economic system.

It was emphasised that such an approach becomes particularly relevant in the context of a turbulent international environment, where one of the principal factors of resilience is a state capable of formulating and implementing long-term development priorities. In this regard, Kazakhstan’s chosen course, the ISRS representative believes, sets an important vector not only for national development but also for the entire Central Asian region.

Akramjon Nematov paid particular attention to the similarity of the structural challenges faced by the region’s countries, including dependence on raw materials, technological lag, as well as demographic and climate risks. In this context, he noted that modernisation processes are most effective when national

strategies are aligned and coordinated at the regional level.

According to the expert's assessment, the potential of Central Asia is truly significant. As a clear illustration, he cited the economy of Uzbekistan, which continues to demonstrate robust growth rates and strong qualitative characteristics. In particular, by the beginning of 2026 the gross domestic product had exceeded USD 145 billion, while exports reached USD 33.4 billion. Crucially – as Akramjon Nematov noted – both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan are consistently moving away from a model of primarily quantitative growth towards a qualitative development trajectory based on knowledge, technology and innovation.

In this context, the expert singled out the key role of the consistent implementation of the deep modernisation agenda in the political programme of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev. In his view, the political will and systemic nature of the reforms initiated by the Uzbek leadership have made it possible to sustain strong economic growth, accelerate institutional reforms, and lay a solid foundation for the transition to a new development model focused on improving living standards and developing human capital.

The ISRS representative emphasised that the reforms being implemented in Uzbekistan are comprehensive and long-term in nature, encompassing the economic, social and governance spheres, and are already exerting a positive impact not only on the country's domestic development but also on the overall dynamics of regional processes. In this context, Uzbekistan's modernisation course is viewed as one of the key factors strengthening the resilience and interconnectedness of Central Asia.

Developing this line of reasoning, Akramjon Nematov drew particular attention to the potential for synergy between the value-based approaches underpinning Kazakhstan's "Adal Azamat" concept and Uzbekistan's "Inson Qadri" (Human dignity) strategy. According to him, the alignment of these initiatives contributes to the formation of a shared standard of responsible citizenship, within which the individual is regarded as the central resource for development.

Drawing on the Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, to the Oliy Majlis, as well as the initiatives put forward by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the expert outlined a number of priority areas for regional cooperation.

First, he underscored the importance of pooling efforts in the field of technological and innovative development. In the expert's view, a coordinated transition towards a high value-added economy, alongside the development of high-tech industries, scientific research and innovation ecosystems, creates the necessary preconditions for strengthening the region's position in the global division of labour.

Second, the need to combine national capacities for the systemic development of human capital was highlighted. The expert believes that adapting education systems and workforce training mechanisms to the evolving demands of the labour market, as well as fostering engineering, digital and managerial competencies, lays the foundation for the long-term competitiveness of Central Asia.

Third, attention was drawn to the growing importance of coordinated action in the fields of environmental sustainability and climate adaptation. According to the expert, joint approaches to energy efficiency, the development of green energy, and enhancing the productivity and resilience of agriculture make it possible to transform the climate agenda from a source of risks into a driver of growth.

Fourth, particular emphasis was placed on the relevance of aligning transport and logistics policies. The establishment of a multi-option system of transport corridors and the coordination of infrastructure projects, as the ISRS representative noted, create the conditions for transforming Central Asia into a major transport and logistics hub of Eurasia.

Fifth, the importance of pooling efforts to advance digitalisation and the deployment of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies was underscored. The harmonisation of digital strategies, the development of AI solutions and e-government services generate economies of scale, accelerate reforms and enhance the

quality of public governance.

Sixth, the need for cultural and humanitarian alignment was highlighted. In the expert's view, the formation of a shared cultural and historical space and the strengthening of regional identity serve simultaneously as a factor of resilience and a driver of long-term development.

In conclusion, Akramjon Nematov emphasised that the consistent modernisation efforts of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are laying a solid foundation for the sustainable growth of the entire Central Asian region. Should these efforts be systematically aligned at the regional level, he assessed, the region could achieve three key outcomes: the strengthening of international agency, an increase in investment attractiveness, and enhanced resilience to external shocks.

"Modernisation is not merely a political choice. For Central Asia, it represents an objective pathway towards more effective regional cooperation, sustainable development, and social progress," concluded the ISRS representative.