

## Uzbekistan's achievements under the UN SDGs: major steps towards sustainable development



On September 23, at the United Nations Headquarters, the general political debates of the 80th anniversary session of the UN General Assembly began, featuring a speech by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

The Head of State elaborated on the ongoing irreversible reforms in Uzbekistan, stressing that the country's commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals remains unwavering.

By signing this global framework in 2015, Uzbekistan embarked on decisive measures. The country formulated 125 national targets and 190 indicators for sustainable development, adapted from the global list to reflect its national context.

To date, Uzbekistan has achieved significant results across the SDGs:

**Goal 1 – No Poverty.** The Republic has consistently implemented measures aimed at substantially reducing poverty, as set out under SDG 1. Thanks to a series of reforms, 7.5 million people have been lifted out of poverty, and in 2024 the poverty rate fell to 8.9%. The target is to reduce it further to 6% by the end of 2025.

A new national model for tracking and providing targeted support to impoverished populations has been introduced, including the implementation of the “Unified Registry of Social Protection” and provision of social services via the “Social Service in Mahalla” module (currently in the rollout phase). In the first phase, more than 20 types of services will be available, with plans to expand to 70 distinct social services.

Unemployed individuals from low-income households are being assisted with job placement, and subsidies are allotted to employers who hire able-bodied women with disabilities.

Goal 2 – Zero Hunger. Significant efforts have been directed toward ensuring food security and nutrition, as envisaged under SDG 2. According to the Global Food Security Index, Uzbekistan ranked first among the Top-10 countries making the greatest progress in food security from 2019 to 2023. The Republic joined the group of countries with low hunger levels.

FAO data shows the prevalence of undernourishment during 2017–2019 was only 2.6%, mainly among pregnant women in the form of anemia. In 2023, child wasting under age 5 was 0.1%, and stunting was 0.5%. The goal is to eradicate all forms of malnutrition by 2030.

In land reforms, 100,000 hectares of sowing land were transferred to 400,000 dekhkans (farmers), enabling an additional 1.5 million tons of food production.

Goal 3 – Good Health and Well-Being. Efforts have been made to ensure a healthy life and promote well-being at all ages. Over recent years, 793 rural family health clinics, 441 emergency care units, and day hospitals were opened. In 306 city and district hospitals, new specialized clinics and 1,200 emergency units were established.

From 2019 to 2023, the maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births fell from 19.6 to 15.9, and the infant mortality rate dropped from 7.9 to 4.5 per 1,000 live births. In 2023, the rate of primary detection of tuberculosis was 46.9 per 100,000 people, a decline of 11.6% compared to 2015.

Goal 4 – Quality Education. Preschool enrollment rose from 20.8% in 2015 to 78% in 2024, while the number of preschools increased from 5,211 to 27,609. Between 2017 and 2024, the number of higher education institutions grew from 77 to 250, and enrollment quotas were quadrupled.

The share of schools equipped with computers and Internet access rose to 97.3% in 2023 (compared to 87.9% in 2017). Female participation in higher education increased fivefold between 2015 and 2023, and youth aged 18–27 with tertiary education grew from 8% to 30%.

Goal 5 – Gender Equality. Women now represent 53% of all students in national universities. In 2024, \$1.5 billion was allocated to support women’s entrepreneurship, and 1.7 million women found employment. Under the “Daughters of the Digital Generation” program, 50,000 girls will receive training, with up to 70% of tuition costs subsidized by the state; for low-income groups, training is provided free of charge.

Goal 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation. Universal and equitable access to proper sanitation in Uzbekistan is reflected in the following figures:

In 2023, safely treated wastewater accounted for 92.5%, and the water pollution index was reduced from 1.58 (2019) to 1.29 (2023).

Coverage by sanitation services reached 96.5% in 2023. The degree of implementation of integrated water resources management increased from 46% in 2019 to 64% in 2023.

Goal 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy. Positive changes in modern energy sources have been recorded. Solar power generation rose from 49.0 million kWh in 2021 to 1,237.3 million kWh in 2023. Wind power generation increased from 1.2 million kWh to 7.2 million kWh over the same period.

Goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth. Measures promoting sustainable economic growth are underway. In 2024, by attracting \$35 billion in investment, more than 9,000 new enterprises were launched, creating about 300,000 high-income jobs.

Consequently, the unemployment rate dropped from 9% in 2019 to 6.8% in 2023. Access to banking, insurance, and payment services reached 78% of the population in 2023.

Goal 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure. In 2025, an additional \$400 million was allocated to improve infrastructure in mahallas, create jobs, and support entrepreneurship. Concurrently, projects worth \$1.3 billion are being implemented in 810 mahallas covering water supply, sewage, roads, schools,

and kindergartens.

Goal 10 – Reduced Inequalities. From 2019 to 2023, income growth per capita among the poorest 40% of households rose from 16.9% to 22.4%. Legal and institutional mechanisms established during this period helped reduce poverty, especially among families with children and people with disabilities.

Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities. A significant expansion of housing construction increased the per capita living space from 15.7 m<sup>2</sup> in 2015 to 19.1 m<sup>2</sup> in 2023. Over 300,000 apartments and individual houses were built—ten times more than in earlier years of independence.

Today, 86.9% of the population has access to efficient public transport, and 75% of solid household waste is collected and disposed of at controlled sites.

Goal 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production. Each year, 7 million tons of household waste are generated, and the recycling share rose from 21.9% to 26%. There are 307 recycling enterprises in the country, producing 1,400 tons of products from waste. Between 2019 and 2021, toxic industrial waste of hazard classes 1-3 per capita declined from 13.1 kg to 8.5 kg (2022).

Goal 13 – Climate Action. Nine comprehensive programs and strategies have been adopted to enhance climate resilience and reduce greenhouse gases. In Karakalpakstan, more than 1.5 million hectares of protective desert forest plantations were established on the Aral Sea's dried seabed.

Goal 15 – Life on Land. Measures to protect and restore terrestrial ecosystems and to manage forests sustainably have been implemented. Over five years, forest cover increased from 8.3% to 8.7%. In mountain and foothill areas, nut trees were planted on 8,000 hectares, and reforestation was carried out on 1,000 hectares within forest areas, promoting natural regeneration.

Goal 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. In 2016–2017, Uzbekistan initiated full-scale reforms in public administration, establishing the Public Service Development Agency and the Anti-Corruption Agency, and adopting anti-corruption programs.

As a result, according to the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), in 2021 Uzbekistan ranked 116th out of 208 countries on the "Government Effectiveness" indicator, improving by 22 places.

Goal 17 – Partnerships for the Goals. Uzbekistan has opened its doors to economic cooperation with all countries, especially in Central Asia. In 2024, it attracted \$34.9 billion in foreign investments and loans, accounting for 67.6% of the total invested funds.

Overall, Uzbekistan has built a robust foundation for the timely and high-quality achievement of its national sustainable development targets by 2030, presenting the world with a unique national example of social, economic, and environmental responsibility.

**Lola Saidova**, Doctor of Law, Professor,

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