

BRICS Plus format – new opportunities for Uzbekistan



The participation of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev at the invitation of the Chinese leader Xi Jinping in the new BRICS Plus format, where issues in the field of sustainable development for the period up to 2030 were discussed, is another proof of the increased role of the country in shaping the global agenda, recognizing the effectiveness of the ongoing policy that ensures sustainable development and has a stabilizing effect on regional processes.

For Uzbekistan, which is an integral part of the world economic system, this platform opens up new ways to deepen multilateral cooperation with the major states of the world, uniting three world continents, in addressing the challenges of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Judging by the numbers, we can see that the BRICS countries account for 26% of the Earth's territory, 42% of the world's population (2.83 billion people) and 27% of world GDP, about 20% of global trade and 25% of direct investment. This potential of the BRICS creates the necessary prerequisites for the development and adoption of effective solutions to the global challenges that the international community is facing today.

In this regard, the President of Uzbekistan put forward a number of initiatives designed to make an important contribution to ensuring global sustainable development. I would like to focus on some of them.

In particular, he proposed to support the UN call for decisive action to ensure a stable and open circulation of food products on world markets.

Indeed, in the context of the current turbulent scenario for the development of international trade, protectionist measures have become commonplace, this initiative is becoming very relevant and timely. Ongoing conflicts in some regions of the world, along with technogenic and climate crises, have led to a sharp increase in prices for basic food products, which is confirmed by data from international organizations.

In particular, according to the World Bank, as of the end of May this year, the world agricultural price index rose by more than 40% compared to the same period last year, and for certain food products, the increase ranged from 20 to 90%.

As we observe, this food crisis has also not bypassed Uzbekistan, which is part of the global food system.

The government of our country is taking proactive systemic measures to overcome the consequences of this crisis. In particular, the agricultural sector is developing at a faster pace, food imports are actively increasing, basic food products are exempt from state duties and VAT, subsidies are allocated, including for some food production costs, etc.

Given the changes in the world food market, the President of Uzbekistan believes that it is the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa), which account for up to 50% of world agricultural production, that should play an important role in overcoming the food crisis.

In particular, the BRICS countries produce about 40% of wheat (over 260 million tons), more than 30% of poultry meat (over 30 million tons), 30% of beef (about 20 million tons) of the global indicator. With this in mind, Shavkat Mirziyoyev proposed using the enormous potential of the BRICS to deepen cooperation in order to form a reliable supply system and ensure food availability.

As we know, the food crisis is also significantly affected by climate change issues. In this regard, the Head of Uzbekistan put forward an initiative to consolidate efforts in combating desertification, in preserving biodiversity and ensuring water balance, and promoting green economy projects. Only through multilateral cooperation can the consequences of climate change be mitigated, incl. in Central Asia, which is increasingly experiencing the negative impact of global climate change. Today, droughts, landslides, floods, sandstorms have become normal. According to WB experts, with an increase in the average temperature in the world by the end of the 21st century by 4 degrees, in the region the warming will exceed 7 degrees. Already by 2050, according to calculations, a decrease in water resources in the Syrdarya basin is expected - up to 5%, in the Amudarya basin - up to 15%. All these factors cause significant damage to the economy, incl. food, energy, water, environmental and economic security.

At the same time, the food crisis, the negative consequences of climate change lead to the socio-economic marginalization of the population, give rise to hunger and poverty. This is confirmed by the disappointing forecasts of international organizations. According to the estimates of the UN World Food Program, about 400 million people in the world may suffer from hunger.

With this in mind, according to the President of Uzbekistan, one of the key areas of cooperation within the framework of the BRICS Plus platform is the implementation of programs in the field of poverty reduction and entrepreneurship support. In this regard, Uzbekistan is also taking consistent steps, achieving certain positive results - the country is dynamically approaching the transition from low-income countries to the category of middle-income countries and today can share its experience in combating this social evil.

In particular, the legal and institutional framework for poverty reduction has been created, including through the development of entrepreneurship, positions of those responsible for poverty reduction at the mahalla, district, city, region and country levels have been introduced into the management vertical. Targeted support for low-income families, disabled people, women and youth is constantly expanding.

In general, it can be concluded that the participation of the Head of Uzbekistan at this important event will help saturate the global agenda with the experience of Uzbekistan in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals and at the same time open up new opportunities and horizons for multilateral cooperation in solving urgent problems of the country's socio-economic development aimed at, incl. to improve the well-being of the population of our republic.

The BRICS Plus concept was initiated by China in 2017. This concept was developed at the BRICS Summit in South Africa in 2018. The BRICS Plus format is cooperation between the main BRICS members and their

regional partners from developing countries.

A. Nizamov,
Department Head,
Institute for Strategic and Regional studies
under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

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