

## “Uzbekistan – UAE: Partnership for a Green Future



Relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have been experiencing a period of rapid development in recent years, characterized by deepening cooperation in many areas, especially sustainable development and the green economy.

Against this background, the visit of President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the UAE and his participation in the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week 2025 (ADSW 2025) underscore the strategic importance of the partnership for both countries, demonstrating their commitment to the principles of environmentally responsible development and readiness for active international interaction in this area.

It is worth noting that this event takes on special significance in the context of current global challenges and growing cooperation between the two states.

Both Uzbekistan and the UAE are consistently implementing a policy of sustainable development and environmental protection, confirming this with concrete actions.

Tashkent's goal of achieving a 50% share of renewable energy sources in the national energy balance by 2030 is well aligned with the UAE's sustainable development initiatives. In particular, our country's accession to the UAE's "Tripling Renewable Energy Capacities" initiative is noteworthy in this regard.

Undoubtedly, the participation of the Uzbek leader in ADSW 2025 will allow to demonstrate the country's achievements in the field of sustainable development, share a vision of the future and expand

opportunities for cooperation with global partners, especially with the UAE.

In addition, this takes on special significance in light of the announcement of 2025 in the republic as the "Year of Environmental Protection and Green Economy", which creates a unique synergy between international experience and the country's national priorities.

Given these circumstances, it can be stated that our country is implementing a comprehensive approach to solving environmental problems and sustainable development. The National Program for 2025 will focus on the introduction of green technologies, water conservation, landscaping, mitigation of the Aral Sea disaster, waste management and improvement of public health.

The country has already made significant efforts in this direction.

Thus, over the past five years, Uzbekistan has significantly strengthened its environmental policy. A strategy for the transition to a green economy was adopted and the necessary institutions were created, including the Interdepartmental Council. An important step was the transformation of the relevant ministry and the creation of the Climate Council under the President. The culmination of these efforts is the inclusion of environmental protection provisions in the updated Constitution, which emphasizes the priority of environmental issues at the state level.

In 2021, the country launched the Yashil Makon (Green Space) environmental initiative. The project aims to increase the country's greening to 12.4% by 2030, including the creation of new parks and expansion of forests. Yashil Makon plays a key role in achieving environmental sustainability and fulfilling the country's international climate commitments.

Uzbekistan has become a regional leader in promoting climate initiatives in Central Asia. At Tashkent's proposal in 2022, the states of the region adopted the Green Agenda programme and supported the development of a joint Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

In 2023, the Central Asian University for Environment and Climate Change Studies (Green University) opened in Tashkent, hosting a Climate Science Forum with the participation of international experts.

The Republic has shown itself as an active participant in the global environmental agenda, having put forward the adoption of three significant UN resolutions. In 2021, the country proposed to recognise the Aral Sea region as a zone of environmental innovation, and in 2023 it launched initiatives on sustainable forest management and strengthening regional environmental cooperation in Central Asia.

These steps clearly illustrate Tashkent's active participation in global environmental initiatives and confirm the national course for the development of a "green" economy.

Undoubtedly, Uzbekistan's international environmental initiatives find active support in the international arena, where the UAE occupies a special place.

Uzbek-UAE contacts, which began in 1992 with the establishment of diplomatic ties, have developed over the past three decades into a strong strategic cooperation based on mutual respect and trust. An important moment in the development of bilateral ties was the visit of the President of Uzbekistan to the UAE in 2019, during which important agreements were signed that laid the foundation for expanding contacts in various areas, including economics, investment and innovation.

Subsequent high-level visits, such as the visit of Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to Uzbekistan in November 2023 and President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's talks with the UAE delegation led by Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Maktoum last year, have given new impetus to the development of bilateral contacts.

The participation of the President of Uzbekistan in the COP 28 conference in the UAE was a significant step in strengthening the interaction of the two countries in the field of ecology and sustainable development.

This event demonstrated their common commitment to solving global environmental challenges and strengthened the partnership in promoting "green" energy.

Thus, relations between Uzbekistan and the UAE continue to develop dynamically, covering a wide range of areas of cooperation and contributing to the sustainable progress of the two states.

One of the most dynamically developing areas of cooperation between Uzbekistan and the UAE is the renewable energy sector. The Emirati company Masdar plays a key role in the implementation of major projects in this area and is a reliable and strategic partner.

The flagship project was the 500 MW Zarafshan wind power plant (WPP) in Navoi region, which was successfully commissioned in 2024. The wind farm is the largest in Central Asia and is capable of providing electricity to about 500,000 households while preventing emissions of about 1.1 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year.

In addition to wind energy, Masdar is actively investing in solar energy in Uzbekistan. In 2021, the Nur Navoi solar power plant with a capacity of 100 MW was launched. In addition, the company is implementing projects to build solar power plants in various regions of Uzbekistan, including Gallaaral, Kattakurgan and Sherabad districts, with a total capacity of about 900 MW.

At COP29 in Baku last November, Masdar and the Ministry of Energy of Uzbekistan agreed to build a 1 GW wind farm in Mingbulak. The project will not only increase clean energy production, but will also create 600 to 800 new jobs and save 1 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually. Thanks to the construction of the wind farm, emissions into the atmosphere will be reduced by 1.4 million tons per year, energy security will increase, and new jobs will be created.

Masdar projects in Uzbekistan currently generate 1.5 GW of renewable energy, with another 0.5 GW under construction. The goal is to reach a total capacity of 4 GW.

Emirati companies not only invest in the development of the sector, but also actively transfer experience and technology, contributing to the sustainable development of the country's energy sector.

Uzbek-Emirati cooperation in the field of sustainable development goes beyond the energy sector. The countries actively exchange experiences and implement joint projects to combat climate change, preserve water resources and combat desertification.

Agriculture and water management are critical areas for both countries. Uzbekistan, which faces drought and water shortages, has shown great interest in the UAE's innovative technologies in water management and dryland agriculture.

Cooperation in this area includes the introduction of advanced irrigation systems, the development of sustainable agriculture and the exchange of experience in adapting agriculture to climate change.

Direct interaction has been established between the UAE Ministry of Food and Water Security and the Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan to explore the possibilities of implementing joint programs and projects in agriculture and the food industry.

Priority attention is given to issues of efficient use of water resources. Given the UAE's rich experience in water desalination and the introduction of water-saving technologies in agriculture, the Uzbek side is actively studying and applying the best practices of Emirati firms and companies to solve the problems of water shortage in the Aral Sea region.

In the area of sustainable urbanization and development of smart cities, the country is also adopting the experience of the UAE. In 2024, a memorandum of cooperation was signed in the field of development of data processing centers and artificial intelligence, which opens up new opportunities for digitalization of urban infrastructure and improving the quality of life of citizens.

Thus, it can be said with confidence that the visit of the head of Uzbekistan to the UAE and his participation in the Abu Dhabi Sustainable Development Week mark an important stage in the development of bilateral relations.

For Uzbekistan, this is an opportunity to attract investment and technology in the green economy, and for the UAE, to strengthen its position as a regional leader in sustainable development and expand cooperation in Central Asia.

This interaction, based on a common desire for sustainable progress and a “green” future, has the potential to become a model of effective international cooperation in addressing global environmental challenges.

The international community is following the development of this strategic partnership with interest, viewing it as a potential role model in the context of global efforts to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals and combat climate change.

Experts agree that the successful implementation of joint initiatives between Uzbekistan and the UAE can not only contribute to economic growth and improve the environmental situation in both countries, but also have a positive impact on the entire Central Asian region, demonstrating the possibilities of effectively combining economic development and environmental concerns.

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**Source**