

Uzbekistan to provide comprehensive support for labor migrants abroad



On August 17, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev chaired a video session in a wider format to cover also Uzbekistan's diplomatic missions in foreign nations. The officials addressed issues related to comprehensive support for citizens working abroad.

The topic is a matter of discussion in such a format for the first time in the history of Uzbekistan.

Every year, 600-700 thousand people enter our country's labor market. As a result of the measures taken to promote sectors of the economy and regions, up to 500 thousand jobs are created annually. Consequently, employment of almost 200 thousand people has to be provided through external labor migration. This is a natural process that developing economies go through. Where labor migration is properly organized, there is growth in employment and family incomes, increase in the skilled labor force.

In recent years, mounting attention is being directed at protecting the rights and improving the living conditions of our compatriots working abroad. International agreements on labor migration have been concluded with Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Japan and the United Arab Emirates. A special fund has been created to support our citizens working abroad; more than 100 billion soums were allocated for these purposes. In addition, the post of Adviser to the Prime Minister on External Labor Migration has been introduced. All this notwithstanding, the novel system has faced enough issues pending to be addressed.

The meeting participants thus deliberated on issues of social, legal, material and cultural support for our fellow citizens overseas.



The Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations, the Ministry for Support of the Mahalla and Family, as

well as the hokimiyats have been instructed to assist compatriots who returned from abroad in finding employment, with a close eye to their profession, qualifications and plans for the future.

The President stressed the importance of enhancing interaction with major employers in foreign countries to secure decent working conditions for Uzbek citizens. To this end, it is essential first and foremost to train qualified and language-speaking specialists in accordance with requirements of those large companies.

In this regard, the head of our state ordered to establish a new system. The powers of the territorial branches of the Agency for External Labor Migration will be expanded to include the right to conclude direct contracts with foreign employers, and to negotiate with migration services of host countries. The head of the branch will be considered aide to the hokim of the region.

Thus, officials in charge were given directive to hold talks with major employers overseas, increase the number of specialists in demand, as well as help allocate low-interest loans to our labor migrants in the amount of up to 10 million soums to cover travel costs and those related to obtaining a patent and insurance.

Under a resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, signed August 11 this year, measures were outlined to train people in vocations in demand in the labor market, in entrepreneurship basics and foreign languages. The current meeting served to discuss the practical aspects of the implementation of that document. The issues considered included professional development of those wishing to work abroad, creation of vocational training centers for these purposes, organization of learning courses and mono-centers. Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted the importance of adapting the curricula of these institutions and the acquired competencies to the expectations of foreign employers.

The head of state instructed to draw finances for life and health insurance of labor migrants from the Fund to Support and Protect the Rights and Interests of Citizens Working Abroad.

The President maintained that procedures related to departure of labor migrants be simplified, and offices of the Uzbek Agency for External Labor Migration be opened in cities with considerable number of our compatriots. Also, the task was set to bolster the legal protection of citizens abroad, launch an online platform and call center for these purposes, and invite qualified lawyers.

Our country's diplomatic missions abroad, Shavkat Mirziyoyev stated, should strengthen ties with expats. The President even proposed to mark the gracious deeds and reward persons who, out of patriotic and noble feelings, help our citizens abroad.

As it was noted at the video session, culture is an important facet binding labor migrants to the homeland, and hence what is needed is increase in outbound cultural events. The President recommended that the activities of Uzbekistan's embassies and consulates for the benefit of our people abroad be widely covered on television.

The Ministry for the Support of Mahalla and Family has been instructed, together with local hokimiyats, to regularly visit the homes of citizens who have gone to work abroad, to inquire about the health of their parents, the education of their children, and to assist in solving issues they face.

Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized the need to shore up the entrepreneurial initiatives of citizens who returned from abroad. For this purpose, a system of targeted work with such compatriots will be established to include financial support for them.

Thus, sector leaders, officials of labor authorities and mahallas will form lists of those bent on enterprise and consider their business projects. They will assist in procedures of registration, in the provision of rental subsidies for up to 3 months. In addition, loan resources will be assigned for starting a business, with partial reimbursement for credit insurance. By the end of this year, 25 billion soums will be allocated from

the Employment Promotion Fund for these purposes, and 100 billion soums for loans.

As few as 4.5 thousand people are registered currently in the system of recording the work experience of citizens abroad. In this respect, responsible executives were given directive to extend to labor migrants the procedure for registering and calculating work experience, similar to what applies to self-employed persons.

Deputy prime ministers were instructed to devise a special program for organized migration, providing for the introduction of a system of economic, financial, organizational and legal assistance for labor migrants. The scheme would cover issues like vocational and language training, honing skills to work abroad, travel expenses, obtaining a patent, insurance, retirement benefits and loans. Apart from that, measures are to be developed to deliver decent conditions for compatriots abroad through intergovernmental commissions, including the elaboration of mechanisms for lending for them through foreign banks.

Following the discussions, ministers and heads of government agencies, hokims of regions and ambassadors in foreign countries reported on their plans to address the priority tasks identified at the video session.

