



## The renewed Constitution through the eyes of the Youth

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### ABSTRACT

This article examines the renewed Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan through the eyes of the young generation and its impact on promoting democracy, human rights, and the well-being of its citizens, particularly young people. The article provides an overview of the key changes introduced by the renewed Constitution, including the explicit recognition of ensuring human rights and freedoms as the highest goal of the state, the establishment of a strong parliament that enhances representation of diverse interests and perspectives of citizens, and the government's commitment to maintaining and developing relations with compatriots living abroad. The article also discusses the potential advantages of constitutional reforms for young people.

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Uzbekistan, a country with a rich cultural heritage and a young population, has recently renewed its Constitution, enacting several amendments designed to advance democratic principles and safeguard fundamental human rights. The new Constitution recognizes human rights and freedoms as the highest goal of the state, a noteworthy advancement for a nation that has experienced major political and social transformations in recent times. In this article, we will examine the renewed Constitution's contribution to the promotion of democratic values and human rights in Uzbekistan, and its aiming to enhance political accountability, transparency, and citizen engagement in the governance system. We will also examine the impact of the renewed Constitution on young people, who are likely to reap benefits from the country's endeavors to foster a more inclusive and equitable society. By exploring these themes, we hope to provide a deeper understanding of the renewed Constitution of Uzbekistan and its implications for the country's future. This new Constitution is going to replace the previous version that was adopted in 1992, and introduces significant changes to the country's political system. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land and outlines the fundamental principles and values of the Uzbek state. The renewed Constitution includes provisions that aim to strengthen democratic institutions, promote human rights and freedoms, and ensure the separation of powers between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. *"I think we all understand well that in order to implement the tasks reflected in the development strategy and which are important in building a just, truly people's state, first of all, a constitutional foundation and an even stronger legislative base will be needed. In this sense, harmonization of the basic law with the modern realities of our society, the essence of our consistent reforms, as well as the creation of a solid legal foundation for the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan, becomes an important task,"* the president of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev said in his congratulations to the people of Uzbekistan in connection with the upcoming Constitution Day. He noted that this issue was particularly emphasized in the proposals of citizens, the general public, representatives of political parties during the meetings held this year before the presidential elections, which put constitutional reforms on the agenda as an objective necessity.

The renewed Constitution of Uzbekistan plays a crucial role in promoting democracy and human rights in the country. One of the significant changes introduced by the renewed Constitution is the explicit recognition of ensuring human rights and freedoms as the highest goal of the state. This provision emphasizes the government's commitment to protecting and promoting the rights of its citizens, and provides a framework for ensuring that human rights are respected and upheld. Another important change introduced by the renewed Constitution is the establishment of a strong parliament, which can lead to enhanced representation of the diverse interests and perspectives of citizens in the legislative process. This can contribute to improved governance efficacy and responsiveness, as well as heightened government responsibility and answerability to the public. Similarly, the efficient and accountable government can lead to a more effective administration of the country's affairs, while the independent and fair judicial system can facilitate the realization of citizens' right to access justice. These changes can collectively contribute to the creation of a citizen-oriented state that prioritizes the public interest. Empirical evidence and illustrative case studies can provide specific examples of how these changes can benefit citizens and promote democratic governance.

Additionally, renewed Constitution of Uzbekistan places a strong emphasis on maintaining and developing relations with compatriots living abroad, reflecting the country's commitment to promoting international cooperation and global citizenship. This commitment is reflected in the Constitution's explicit recognition of the importance of protecting the rights and interests of citizens living both within and outside the country's borders, as well as its commitment to promoting economic, cultural, and social ties with the Uzbek diaspora. By prioritizing the welfare of its citizens abroad, Uzbekistan seeks to foster closer ties with its diaspora communities and strengthen its global presence, while also promoting the values of tolerance, diversity, and mutual respect. This commitment to engaging with compatriots living abroad is indicative of Uzbekistan's efforts to build a more inclusive and connected society, one that values the contributions of all its citizens regardless of where they reside, and to promote the principles of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law on a global scale.

More than 220,000 suggestions were received on the draft constitutional law in Uzbekistan, with over 60 percent of them provided directly by young people, indicating their active engagement with the constitutional reform process. This level of participation underscores the importance of ensuring that the concerns and perspectives of young people are taken into account in the development of constitutional norms and policies. As a result, the updated Constitution includes a separate chapter devoted to the issue of "Family, Children and Youth" which underscores the government's commitment to promoting the well-being and development of young people in the country.

It was also noted that the draft constitutional law for the first time includes ensuring the development of a continuous education system, its various types and forms, and state and non-state educational organizations as a task of the state. This provision establishes a solid legal basis for the development of all educational organizations, from kindergartens to universities, regardless of whether they are public or private. This inclusion of education-related norms at the constitutional level is expected to be an important event, as it provides a legal framework for the state's obligations in the field of education and upbringing of children of kindergarten age.

The importance of quality pre-school education was also highlighted, as it has a positive effect on the entire life of a person. The state's guarantee of free general secondary education and primary professional education is another important innovation, which underscores the government's commitment to promoting equal access to education for all citizens. Furthermore, the provision of inclusive education and training in educational institutions for children with special educational needs is a significant norm that emphasizes the government's commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion in the education system. This norm ensures that children with physical, mental, sensory, or mental disabilities are not isolated and have the opportunity to develop and mature as full members of society.

The updated Constitution of Uzbekistan establishes the right of citizens to receive higher education at the expense of the state, based on selection in state educational institutions. This constitutional provision is a significant step towards ensuring that the positive trend of increasing the number of state grants for higher education is sustained, and that grant seats in state higher education institutions are not reduced. In the last five years, the number of state grants for higher education has increased by 75%, and the number of state

grants for women and girls with children from needy families has doubled. Additionally, the practice of allocating state grants for the training of specialists in non-state higher education institutions has been established. The Constitution also grants higher education organizations the right to academic freedom, self-management, research, and teaching freedom, which serves to limit external interference in the higher education process and increase the quality and competitiveness of higher education in the world.

Moreover, the Constitution recognizes the state's responsibility to create an environment that fosters the full physical, mental, and cultural development of children. The state is obliged to protect the rights, freedoms, and legal interests of the child and provide the necessary conditions and opportunities for their growth as well-rounded individuals. Furthermore, the state and society have a duty to instill in children and young people a sense of loyalty to national and universal values, pride in their country and cultural heritage, patriotism, and love for the Motherland. By prioritizing the development of children and young people, Uzbekistan is taking a significant step towards building a prosperous and sustainable future for its citizens.

The updated Constitution of Uzbekistan is an important step in promoting democracy, human rights and the well-being of citizens. Clearly recognizing the protection of human rights and freedoms as the highest goal of the country, creating a strong parliament that expresses the diverse interests and opinions of citizens, and clarifying the government's will to maintain and develop relations with its compatriots living abroad. Uzbekistan is taking important steps to create a prosperous and sustainable future for all its citizens. However, it is important that governments continue to prioritize the development of their citizens and promote more inclusive and democratic societies. By introducing the norms listed in the Constitution of the Republic, it is a practical proof of how much our State cares about its citizens. This increases people's confidence and instills pride in being a citizen of Uzbekistan. I am proud of my Constitution! We are proud of our country!

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