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Promotion and protection of human rights**Letter dated 4 December 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to convey to you the attached information on the twenty-second anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 68, "Promotion and protection of human rights".

(Signed) Muzaffar **Madrakhimov**



Annex to the letter dated 4 December 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Constitution of Uzbekistan: 22 years

On 8 December, Uzbekistan will celebrate the twenty-second anniversary of its Basic Law: the Constitution.

Over the past years, successive constitutional reforms of the country's public administration have established a solid legal foundation for democratic development and a free civil society.

Human rights and freedoms are accorded the greatest value under the Constitution, and a wise legal framework has been crafted on that basis to govern the relationship among the citizen, the State and society.

An important step was taken when a number of laws were enacted to further improve the activities of the bicameral parliament and give deputies at all levels and from all political parties a greater role in reviewing and adopting laws and regulations, with the result that no document can now be adopted without taking into account the views and proposals of parliamentary groups.

The parliament of Uzbekistan has adopted 16 codes and more than 700 laws, and has ratified over 80 international human rights instruments.

Under our Constitution, the organization of the government and the conduct of its work are based on the principle of power-sharing. The legislative, executive and judicial branches of government uphold the principle of separation of powers.

Substantive work has been done to further improve the legal and judicial system and to establish an independent judiciary. This includes the following specific steps:

- Specialized criminal, civil and commercial courts have been established. A mechanism has been set up for the selection of qualified judicial personnel.
- A special body — the High Commission on Qualifications — has been established to select judges and make recommendations on their appointment for service under the President of Uzbekistan.
- In 2008, the death penalty was abolished and the power to authorize detention was transferred from the prosecutors to the courts.
- Based on the principle of generosity and humanism, the penalties of life or long-term imprisonment are imposed instead of the death penalty. Life imprisonment is the maximum penalty and consequently it is used to punish only two types of crime: premeditated murder with aggravating circumstances and terrorism. In Uzbekistan, these penalties are not applied to women, persons who were under the age of 18 at the time of the offence, or men over 60.

- Around 75 per cent of criminal offences previously classified as serious or especially serious offences have been reclassified as minor or less serious offences.
- Alternative, non-custodial forms of punishment have been introduced. Penalties involving deprivation of liberty have been removed for 26 criminal offences.
- The legislation defining the elements of 53 criminal offences now includes a reconciliation process based on national values.
- The time limits for preliminary investigation and detention have been shortened significantly and specific time limits have been stipulated for the consideration of cases by the courts.
- Non-custodial penalties have been stipulated for offences involving damage to property resulting from economic crimes.
- The “Miranda rule” has been set out in legislation. An individual is entitled to receive legal services from the moment he or she is put in detention. The independence of the legal profession and qualified defence counsel are guaranteed.

The application of humanist ideology to criminal legislation and law enforcement has had a positive impact in stabilizing the sociopolitical situation and criminality in Uzbekistan.

It is particularly important to highlight that the social policy implemented by Uzbekistan in recent years has significantly enhanced the standard and quality of life of the Uzbek people.

In 2013, real income increased by 16 per cent, while average monthly salaries, pensions, social security benefits and education grants increased by 20.8 per cent.

The average pension in Uzbekistan is currently 37.5 per cent of the average monthly wage. That figure is slated to rise to 41 per cent this year.

The ongoing introduction of carefully considered reforms of this kind is clearly an important step towards the implementation of our guiding principle: “From a strong State to a strong civil society”.

The Uzbek Constitution provides a solid legal basis for the protection of citizens’ rights in the areas of health, education and ownership.

A unified system of free, high-quality health care that meets the highest international standards has been established.

It should be noted in particular that as a result of large-scale measures to protect people’s health by equipping the health system with the latest technology and further strengthening disease prevention, average life expectancy in Uzbekistan had increased from 66 to 73.5 years overall, and for women to 75 years.

Under a national programme, a system of 12 years of free and compulsory education based on a pattern of nine years plus three years has been introduced.

The primary feature of this model is that after receiving nine years of general education, students study for three years in specialized academic high schools and vocational colleges. In addition to knowledge of the standard disciplines taught in

these institutions, each graduate develops specialized knowledge in two or three areas that are in demand in the labour market.

More than 1,500 new academic high schools and vocational colleges have been built for this purpose. Institutions of higher learning operate in accordance with national and international educational standards.

According to the World Bank, the level of literacy in Uzbekistan is among the highest in the world, at nearly 100 per cent.

Currently, more than 1,800,000 children — 1.4 times as many as in 2003 — participate regularly in over 30 sports in Uzbekistan. It should be noted that 1,113 children's sports facilities have been built in the past 10 years.

According to the United Nations, more than 35 per cent of the State budget of Uzbekistan is allocated to education.

The gains achieved over the past 23 years of independent development give a clear picture of the tremendous changes that have occurred in our Republic. During this period, the Uzbek economy has grown by a factor of 4.1.

The continuous improvement of the legal and regulatory framework and the creation of the necessary conditions for the liberalization of society and the business environment have played an important role in promoting the steady and sustainable development of our economy and raising the standard of living.

The legal foundation for that achievement was, first and foremost, the guarantees enshrined in the Constitution to support small businesses and private enterprise. In the past year alone, more than 26,000 small businesses started up in Uzbekistan, bringing the total to 190,000 by the end of the year.

Small businesses account for 23 per cent of industrial production, almost all market services produced, 18 per cent of exports and 75 per cent of employment in the different sectors of the economy.

Efforts are ongoing to reduce the disparities between rural and urban areas. As part of the effort to improve the living standard of our people, the construction of comfortable housing with all the conveniences has become standard practice in rural areas. Over the past four years, more than 23,000 houses and upwards of a thousand pieces of social infrastructure have been built in 159 rural settlements. By the end of this year alone, over 10,000 standard-model individual houses will have been completed.

More than 8,000 non-governmental non-commercial organizations are currently operating in Uzbekistan. Over the past three years, the amount of funding allocated by the public Fund for the support of non-governmental non-commercial organizations and other civil society institutions accredited to the Oliy Majlis (parliament) of Uzbekistan has doubled.

There are national cultural centres for the more than 140 nationalities and ethnicities in our country. These centres are making a valuable contribution to the preservation, promotion and strengthening of the culture, language, traditions and customs of those nations.

An organizational and legal foundation for strengthening the media has been established. As a result, in the past 10 years, the number of print and electronic

media outlets has increased 1.5-fold and sevenfold, respectively, bringing the total to more than 1,300. Eighty-seven per cent of those outlets are non-State television and radio channels.

The independent path to development followed by Uzbekistan, based on its rich history and national values, is deserving of international recognition and will earn it a prominent place in the international community.

There is no question that a State's constitution is a reflection of its authority and status. In this sense, our Basic Law, which reflects the will and spirit, the conscience and culture of the people, serves as a solid foundation for the bright future facing the many nationalities and ethnicities living side by side in Uzbekistan as one family.
