INTRODUCTION - Uzbekistan officially the Republic of Uzbekistan, is a doubly landlocked country in Central Asia. It is a unitary, constitutional, presidential republic, comprising 12 provinces, 1 autonomous republic, and 1 capital city. Uzbekistan is bordered by five countries: Kazakhstan and the Aral Sea to the north; Tajikistan to the southeast; Kyrgyzstan to the northeast; Afghanistan to the south; and Turkmenistan to the southwest.

Uzbekistan in World Map

Uzbekistan is officially a democratic, secular, unitary, constitutional republic with a diverse cultural heritage. The country's official language is Uzbek, a Turkic language spoken natively by approximately 85% of the population; Russian remains in widespread use. Uzbeks constitute 81% of the population, followed by Russians (5.4%), Tajiks (4.0%), Kazakhs (3.0%), and others (6.5%). A majority of Uzbeks are non-denominational Muslims. Uzbekistan is a member of the CIS, OSCE, UN, and the SCO.

Formal Name: Republic of Uzbekistan (OzbekistonRespublikasi).

Short Form: Uzbekistan.

Term for Citizen(s): Uzbekistani(s).

Currency: Uzbek Soum (UZS)

Capital: Tashkent.

Population: 28,929,716

Nationality: Uzbek, Uzbekistani.
Other Major Cities: Namangan, Samarqand (Samarkand), Andijon (Andizhan), Bukhoro, (Bukhara, Buxoro), and Nukus (in order of population size).

Independence: Uzbekistan celebrates September 1, 1991, as its date of independence. That is the date on which independence from the Soviet Union was declared.

Government Type: Republic; authoritarian presidential rule, with little power outside the executive branch.

TimeZone: Uzbekistan’s time zone is five hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.
Languages: Uzbek (official) 74.3%, Russian 14.2%, Tajik 4.4%, other 7.1%

Ethnic groups: Uzbek 80%, Russian 5.5%, Tajik 5%, Kazakh 3%, Karakalpak 2.5%, Tatar 1.5%, other 2.5% (1996 est.)

Religions: Muslim 88% (mostly Sunni), Eastern Orthodox 9%, other 3%

Agriculture - products: cotton, vegetables, fruits, grain; livestock

Industries: textiles, food processing, machine building, metallurgy, mining, hydrocarbon extraction, chemicals

Industrial production growth rate: 7.1%

Flag: The flag is divided into three equal horizontal stripes of blue (top), white, and green, which are separated by thin red stripes. On the left side of the blue stripe is a crescent moon with 12 five-pointed stars, all in white. The blue represents water; the white, peace; the green, nature; and the red, life. The stars represent either the 12 constellations of the zodiac or the 12 provinces of Uzbekistan.

POLITICS

The Legislative Chamber of the Supreme Assembly (Lower House). Islam Karimov, president of Uzbekistan, during a visit to the Pentagon in 2002.

After Uzbekistan declared independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, an election was held, and Islam Karimov was elected as the first President of Uzbekistan.

The elections of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament or Supreme Assembly) were held under a resolution adopted by the 16th Supreme Soviet in 1994. In that year, the Supreme
Soviet was replaced by the OliyMajlis. The third elections for the bicameral 150–member OliyMajlis, the Legislative Chamber, and the 100–member Senate for five-year terms, were held on 27 December 2009. The second elections that were held in December 2004–05. The OliyMajlis was unicameral up to 2004. Its size increased from 69 deputies (members) in 1994 to 120 in 2004–05, and currently stands at 150.

The referendum passed, and Islam Karimov's term was extended by an act of parliament to December 2007. Most international observers refused to participate in the process and did not recognize the results, dismissing them as not meeting basic standards. The 2002 referendum also included a plan for a bicameral parliament consisting of a lower house (the OliyMajlis) and an upper house (Senate). Members of the lower house are to be "full-time" legislators. Elections for the new bicameral parliament took place on 26 December.

**GEOGRAPHY**

**Location:** Uzbekistan is located in Central Asia, east of the Caspian Sea, directly south of Kazakhstan, north of Turkmenistan, and on the western borders of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Uzbekistan has an area of 447,400 square kilometres (172,700 sq mi), of which 425,400 square kilometers is land surface. It is the 56th largest country in the world by area and the 42nd by population. Among the CIS countries, it is the 5th largest by area and the 3rd largest by population.

**Land Boundaries:** Bordering Kazakhstan and the Aral Sea to the north and northwest, Turkmenistan to the southwest, Tajikistan to the southeast, and Kyrgyzstan to the northeast, Uzbekistan is one of the largest Central Asian states and the only Central Asian state to border all the other four. Uzbekistan also shares a short border (less than 150 km or 93 mi) with Afghanistan to the south.

Uzbekistan has land boundaries with the following countries: Kazakhstan, 2,203 kilometers; Turkmenistan, 1,621 kilometers; Tajikistan, 1,161 kilometers; Kyrgyzstan, 1,099 kilometers; and Afghanistan, 137 kilometers.

**Length of Coastline:** None. Uzbekistan is landlocked.

**Topography** - Uzbekistan is a dry, landlocked country. It is one of two doubly landlocked countries in the world (that is, a country completely surrounded by landlocked countries), the other being Liechtenstein. In addition, due to its location within a series of endorheic basins, none of its rivers lead to the sea. Less than 10% of its territory is intensively cultivated irrigated land in river valleys and oases. The rest is vast desert (Kyzyl Kum) and mountains.
Uzbekistan’s topography is diverse. Almost 80 percent of the surface is desert, dominated by the Qizilqum (Kyzyl Kum) Desert of the north-central part of the country. The mountains of the far southeast and far northeast, which are foothills of the Tian Shan Range, reach 4,500 meters in elevation. In the northeast, the Fergana Valley, which is the country’s center of population, agriculture, and industry, is 200 to 500 meters above sea level, surrounded by mountain ranges, and intersected by the Syr Darya River. The far west is dominated by the Turan Lowland, the Amu Darya valley, and the southern half of the shrinking Aral Sea.

The highest point in Uzbekistan is the Khazret Sultan, at 4,643 metres (15,233 ft) above sea level, in the southern part of the Gissar Range in Surkhandarya Province, on the border with Tajikistan, just northwest of Dushanbe (formerly called Peak of the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party).

**Climate:** The climate of landlocked Uzbekistan is continental, with hot summers and cool winters. Summer temperatures reach 40°C, averaging 32°C. Winter temperatures reach −38°C, averaging −23°C. Rainfall averages vary between 100 millimeters per year in the northwest and 800 millimeters per year in the Tashkent region. Precipitation falls mainly in the winter and spring.

**Natural Resources:** Uzbekistan is self-sufficient in natural gas and oil in the near term. Gold is the most plentiful mineral having export value. Significant amounts of copper, lead, silver, tungsten, uranium, and zinc also are present. Nearly all of Uzbekistan’s arable land requires intensive irrigation. Water, Uzbekistan’s most crucial resource, comes mainly from rivers whose sources are in other countries, requiring bilateral agreements with source countries as well as with other user countries downstream. Uzbekistan’s chronically poor water and irrigation management has resulted in severe environmental crises and regional tensions.

**Land Use:** Some 10.5 percent of Uzbekistan’s land, most of it in the Fergana Valley, is classified as arable, and 0.8 percent is planted to permanent crops. About 0.4 percent is forested. Most of the rest is desert.

**Environmental Factors:** The Aral Sea, half of which is in Uzbekistan, has been severely desiccated by overuse of its tributary rivers, a situation recognized as one of the world’s worst environmental disasters. Enormous overdrafts on these rivers are caused by the extremely low efficiency of irrigation systems in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Without the moderating influence of the sea, winters became significantly colder and summers hotter. Vozrozhdeniya Island in the Aral Sea, now connected to the shore by shrinkage of the sea, contains the lethal remains of a Soviet anthrax weapons testing laboratory, most of which lies in Uzbekistani territory. Drinking water quality also is a major problem, especially in the western province of Karakalpakstan, where water is not properly distributed, and sources
are exposed to various types of surface and underground contamination. Inadequate sewage disposal adds to Uzbekistan's water pollution problem: only 40 percent of the population is served by sewerage systems. Some 15,000 hectares of pastureland are lost to salt and dust annually. Soil contamination is highest in agricultural areas that have been subjected to annual overdoses of fertilizers and pesticides. Uncontrolled timber cutting has endangered the few remaining stands of forest.

The main environmental protection agency, the State Committee for Nature Protection, nominally has responsibility for a wide variety of regulatory functions. However, like most of Uzbekistan’s ministries, it is outside the small decision-making circle of President Karimov.

**DEMOGRAPHY**

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Uzbekistan lies between latitudes 37° and 46° N, and longitudes 56° and 74° E. It stretches 1,425 kilometres (885 mi) from west to east and 930 kilometres (580 mi) from north to south. Bordering Kazakhstan and the Aral Sea to the north and northwest, Turkmenistan to the southwest, Tajikistan to the southeast, and Kyrgyzstan to the northeast, Uzbekistan is one of the largest Central Asian states and the only Central Asian state to border all the other four. Uzbekistan also shares a short border (less than 150 km or 93 mi) with Afghanistan to the south.

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the SCO.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>28,929,716 (July 2014 est.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-14 years: 24.9% (Male 3,693,838/Female 3,514,734)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24 years: 20.5% (Male 3,008,779/Female 2,934,534)</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-54 years: 43% (Male 6,178,921/Female 6,255,715)</td>
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<tr>
<td>55-64 years: 6.8% (Male 926,129/Female 1,036,576)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 years and over: 4.8% (Male 588,881/Female 791,609) (2014 est.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dependency ratios</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total dependency ratio: 48.3 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth dependency Ratio: 42 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly Dependency ratio: 6.3 %</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Potential Support Ratio: 15.8 (2014 est.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 27.1 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male: 26.6 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female: 27.7 years (2014 est.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population growth rate</td>
<td>0.93% (2014 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth rate</td>
<td>17.02 births/1,000 Population (2014 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death rate</td>
<td>5.29 Deaths/1,000 Population (2014 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net migration rate</td>
<td>-2.46 Migrant(s)/1,000 Population (2014 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanization</td>
<td>Urban Population: 36.2% of Total Population (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rate of Urbanization: 1.27% Annual Rate of Change (2010-15 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major cities - population</td>
<td>TASHKENT (capital) 2.227 million (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex ratio</td>
<td>At Birth: 1.06 male(s)/female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-14 years: 1.05 Male(s)/Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24 years: 1.03 Male(s)/Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-54 years: 0.99 Male(s)/Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 55-64 years: 0.99 Male(s)/Female
### 65 years and over: 0.75 Male(s)/Female
### Total population: 0.99 Male(s)/Female (2014 est.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother's mean age at first birth</td>
<td>23.8 (2006 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant Mortality Rate</td>
<td>Total: 19.84 deaths/1,000 live births</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 23.54 deaths/1,000 live births</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female: 15.93 Deaths/1,000 Live Births (2014 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Expectancy at Birth</td>
<td>Total population: 73.29 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 70.25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female: 76.52 years (2014 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fertility Rate</td>
<td>1.8 Children born/woman (2014 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraceptive Prevalence rate</td>
<td>64.9% (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS - Adult Prevalence Rate</td>
<td>0.1% (2012 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS - People living with HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>29,700 (2012 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS - deaths</td>
<td>2,400 (2012 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking Water Source</td>
<td><strong>Improved:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>urban: 98.5% of population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rural: 80.9% of population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>total: 87.3% of population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Unimproved:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>urban: 1.5% of population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rural: 19.1% of population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>total: 12.7% of population (2012 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation Facility Access</td>
<td><strong>Improved:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban: 100% of Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural: 100% of Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 100% of population</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Unimproved:**
Urban: 0% of population  
Rural: 0% of population  
Total: 0% of population (2012 est.)

| Nationality | **Noun:** Uzbekistani  
**Adjective:** Uzbekistani |
|-------------|------------------------|

**Ethnic groups**
Uzbek 80%, Russian 5.5%, Tajik 5%, Kazakh 3%, Karakalpak 2.5%, Tatar 1.5%, other 2.5% (1996 est.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religions</th>
<th>Muslim 88% (mostly Sunni), Eastern Orthodox 9%, other 3%</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Uzbek (official) 74.3%, Russian 14.2%, Tajik 4.4%, other 7.1%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Literacy**
**Definition:** age 15 and over can read and write  
**Total population:** 99.4%  
**Male:** 99.6%  
**Female:** 99.2% (2011 est.)

| School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education) | **Total:** 12 years  
**Male:** 12 years  
**Female:** 11 years (2011) |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education expenditures</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maternal mortality rate</th>
<th>28 Deaths/100,000 live births (2010)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children under the age of 5 years underweight</td>
<td>4.4% (2006)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health expenditures</th>
<th>5.4% of GDP (2011)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physicians density</td>
<td>2.54 physicians/1,000 population (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital bed density</td>
<td>4.5 beds/1,000 population (2010)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obesity - adult prevalence rate</th>
<th>15.1% (2008)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Ethnic Groups:** Before the Soviet era, Uzbeks identified themselves by clan and by khanate rather than by nationality, which became an ethnic identifier only in
1924 with the union of the khanates in the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic. Despite their different languages, official differentiation of Tajiks and Uzbeks occurred only when the Republic of Tajikistan was established five years later. According to the 1998 census, 76 percent of the population was Uzbek, 6 percent Russian, 4.8 percent Tajik, 4 percent Kazakh, 1.6 percent Tatar, and 1 percent Kyrgyz. However, a substantial portion of the officially Uzbek population, estimated as high as 40 percent, is of Tajik ancestry, and Tajiks predominate in the urban centers of Bukhoro and Samarqand. Substantial numbers of Germans and Ukrainians left in a mass emigration during the 1990s. The Karakalpaks, about 475,000 of whom inhabit western Uzbekistan, are a Turkic people of unclear ethnic origin who now are included with the Uzbeks in official ethnic statistics.

**Languages:** Some 74.3 percent of the population speaks Uzbek, 14.2 percent Russian, and 4.4 percent Tajik. Speakers of Karakalpak, a Turkic language related to Kazakh and Tatar, are included under “Uzbek” in statistics; the number of Karakalpak speakers is not known because many ethnic Karakalpaks use Uzbek dialects. Speakers of Russian, which is officially designated as the “language of interethnic communication,” live mainly in the large cities. Tajik is the most common language in Bukhoro and Samarqand. There are no language requirements for citizenship.

**Religion:** About 88 percent of the population is Muslim and 9 percent Russian Orthodox. Most Uzbek Muslims practice a type of mystic Sufism that is Sunni, introspective, and distinctly nonpolitical. Uzbekistan also has between 15,000 and 20,000 Jews and congregations of Baptists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Korean Protestants, and Seventh-Day Adventists.

**Education and Literacy:** Eleven years of primary and secondary education are obligatory, starting at age seven. This requirement includes four years of primary school and two cycles of secondary school, lasting five and two years, respectively. The rate of attendance in those grades is high, although the figure is significantly lower in rural areas than in urban centers. Preschool registration has decreased significantly since 1991. The official literacy rate is 99 percent. However, in the post-Soviet era educational standards have fallen. Funding and training have not been sufficient to effectively educate the expanding younger cohorts of the population. Between 1992 and 2004, government spending on education dropped from 12 percent to 6.3 percent of gross domestic product. In 2006 education’s share of the budget increased to 8.1 percent. Lack of budgetary support has been more noticeable at the primary and secondary levels, as the government has continued to subsidize university students. However, bribes often are necessary to ensure success and advancement in universities. Between 1992 and 2001, university attendance dropped from 19 percent of the college-age population to 6.4 percent. The three largest of Uzbekistan’s 63 institutions of higher learning are in Nukus, Samarqand,
and Tashkent. All are state-funded. Private schools have been forbidden since the establishment of Islamic fundamentalist (Wahhabi) schools in the early 1990s brought a government crackdown. However, in 1999 the government-supported Taskhent Islamic University was founded for the teaching of Islam.

**Health:** In the post-Soviet era, the quality of Uzbekistan’s health care has declined. Between 1992 and 2003, spending on health care and the ratio of hospital beds to population both decreased by nearly 50 percent, and Russian emigration in that decade deprived the health system of many practitioners. In 2004 Uzbekistan had 53 hospital beds per 10,000 populations. Basic medical supplies such as disposable needles, anesthetics, and antibiotics are in very short supply. Although all citizens nominally are entitled to free health care, in the post-Soviet era bribery has become a common way to bypass the slow and limited service of the state system. In the early 2000s, policy has focused on improving primary health care facilities and cutting the cost of inpatient facilities. The state budget for 2006 allotted 11.1 percent to health expenditures, compared with 10.9 percent in 2005.

**Welfare:** In 2000 Uzbekistan reformed its state-funded pension system, which had suffered from ineffective funds collection and an uneven funding burden that motivated enterprises to avoid support payments. The new system reallocated payment responsibility and collection authority, but it failed to stipulate funding amounts or to stimulate public participation. The system covers all employed persons; the government subsidizes shortfalls and pays substantial amounts in pensions to special categories. Pension eligibility begins at age 60 for men and age 55 for women, provided they have worked 25 and 20 years, respectively. The pension program also funds payments for work injury, maternity, and disability. In 2005 the standard pension amount was raised to US$15.50 per month. Unemployment benefits are payable for 26 weeks at 50
percent of the recipient’s average earnings. Social support payments often are late, and high inflation decreases their value. In 2004 an estimated 28 percent of the population was living below the poverty line.

ECONOMY

Due to high literacy rates and Soviet educational background, religious fundamentalism is not widespread in Uzbekistan; a study showed that only 35% of surveyed consider religion as "very important". Uzbekistan’s economic freedom score is 47.0, making its economy the 160th freest in the 2015 Index. Its score is up by 0.5 point from last year, with improvements in trade freedom, freedom from corruption, and labor freedom outweighing declines in the management of government spending and business freedom. Uzbekistan is ranked 37th out of 42 countries in the Asia–Pacific region, and its overall score is much lower than the world average.

A stagnant economic reform environment over the past five years has turned more positive recently, but gains have not been strong enough to propel the economy out of the “repressed” category. Since 2011, economic freedom in Uzbekistan has increased by 1.2 points, with modest improvements in business freedom, labor freedom, monetary freedom, and trade freedom.

Despite sustained rapid growth on the back of high commodity prices and relative stability, the underlying foundations of Uzbekistan’s economy are weak. The rule of law is weakly enforced, a holdover from the Soviet past. Investment is restricted in many industries, and financial markets are shallow, preventing the capital accumulation necessary for sustained growth. The state-owned banks and industries tend to respond to the government’s political priorities.

Economic Background
Uzbekistan has one of the world’s most repressive governments. President Islam Karimov, in power since the late 1980s, has hinted that he may seek re-election in 2015. Karimov rose through the ranks of the Soviet-era State Planning Committee (Gosplan) and remains wedded to a command economy, which discourages foreign investment. Uzbekistan is dry and landlocked; 11 percent of the land is cultivated in irrigated river valleys. More than 60 percent of the population lives in densely populated rural communities. Production of cotton and grain has relied on overuse of agrochemicals and has depleted water supplies. Much of the agricultural land is degraded, and the Aral Sea and certain rivers are half dry. Uzbekistan is heavily dependent on natural gas, oil, gold, and uranium exports.

Uzbekistan's economy relies mainly on commodity production, including cotton, gold, uranium, and natural gas. Despite the declared objective of transition to a market economy, its government continues to maintain economic controls which deter foreign investment and imports in favour of domestic 'import substitution'.

**Overview:** Uzbekistan suffered less economic shock from the dissolution of the Soviet Union than did most other former Soviet republics because it produces large amounts of cotton and gold, commodities of value on world markets, and because the government stressed development of import-replacement industries in the post-Soviet era. In the 1990s, oil and gas production increased significantly, providing limited exports of natural gas and eliminating the Soviet-era need to import oil. In the same period, the expansion of grain cultivation reduced food imports. Although cotton remains the most valuable agricultural product, cotton output has declined since the mid-1990s. Uzbekistan’s economy has retained many elements of Soviet economic planning. Economic policy remains under state control; the government has strictly limited foreign direct investment, and little privatization has occurred aside from small enterprises. Several economic models have been tried and rejected in the post-Soviet era, and experts generally conclude that the overall economy is in decline. In the early 2000s, agriculture remained the most important economic sector, but the contribution of industry was rising. Informal economic activity accounts for between one-third and one-half of output.

Uzbekistan has the fourth largest gold deposits in the world. The country mines 80 tons of gold annually, seventh in the world. Uzbekistan's copper deposits rank tenth in the world and its uranium deposits twelfth. The country's uranium production ranks seventh globally. The Uzbek national gas company, Uzbekneftegas, ranks 11th in the world in natural gas production with an annual output of 60 to 70 billion cubic meters. The country has significant untapped
reserves of oil and gas: there are 194 deposits of hydrocarbons in Uzbekistan, including 98 condensate and natural gas deposits and 96 gas condensate deposits.

The largest corporations involved in Uzbekistan's energy sector are the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), Petronas, the Korea National Oil Corporation, Gazprom, Lukoil, and Uzbekneftegas.

Along with many Commonwealth of Independent States or CIS economies, Uzbekistan's economy declined during the first years of transition and then recovered after 1995, as the cumulative effect of policy reforms began to be felt. It has shown robust growth, rising by 4% per year between 1998 and 2003 and accelerating thereafter to 7%–8% per year. According to IMF estimates, the GDP in 2008 will be almost double its value in 1995 (in constant prices). Since 2003 annual inflation rates averaged less than 10%.

**Economic Developments**

Despite a subdued performance in the broader Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region, Uzbekistan continues to grow strongly. In 2013, output expanded by 8.0 percent, and by 8.1 percent in the first half of 2014. Real GDP growth averaged 8.4 percent per annum between 2008 and 2013, making Uzbekistan one of the fastest growing economies in the ECA region and the middle-income country grouping during this period.

![Figure1.GDPGrowthinUzbekistan,itsKeyTradePartners,ECA,Middle-IncomeCountries,2008–14 (in percent)](image)

**Source:** Uzbek authorities; World Bank and IMF database.

Uzbekistan has GNI per capita (US$1,900 in current dollars in 2013, giving a PPP equivalent of US$3,800). Economic production is concentrated in commodities. In 2011, Uzbekistan was the world's seventh-largest producer and fifth-largest
exporter of cotton as well as the seventh largest world producer of gold. It is also a regionally significant producer of natural gas, coal, copper, oil, silver and uranium.

The good economic performance in 2013 and the first half of 2014 reflects buoyant domestic demand driven by supportive government policies. Economic growth in the first half of 2014 was 8.1 percent year-on-year, supported by higher growth in construction and services relative to the previous year and stable growth in agriculture and industry. Construction value added reached 17.4 percent year-on-year and services growth accelerated to 14.2 percent year-on-year from 16.1 percent and 12.1 percent, respectively, in the first half of 2013. Agriculture value added grew by 6.9 percent year-on-year, i.e., lower than the 7.3 percent in the first half of 2013. The grain harvest, however, was a record 8 million tons in 2014. Industrial value added grew by 5 percent year-on-year, somewhat lower than in the first half of 2013.

**Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** Uzbekistan’s key trading partners and projected slower import growth, the external current account surplus in 2014 is projected to decline to 2.2 percent of GDP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GDP Growth, %</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013e</th>
<th>2014f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita, current US$</td>
<td>1,377</td>
<td>1,545</td>
<td>1,719</td>
<td>1,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (mid-year), million</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross investment in fixed capital, % of GDP</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation (official CPI, exp), % change</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation (GDP deflator), % change</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current account balance, % of GDP</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal balance, % of GDP</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDI (net), % of GDP</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor remittances (net), % of GDP</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External debt, % of GDP</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GDP growth is projected to slow somewhat to 7.9 percent in 2014, owing to the ongoing weakness in the external environment. These estimates take into consideration a number of downside risks that are expected to push the GDP growth rate down from the 8.1 percent seen in recent years, which is also the rate projected by the Government for 2014. In particular, a weaker external outlook, especially the near zero growth in Russia, the main trading partner of Uzbekistan, will continue to negatively affect exports and remittance flows if tightening continues in other advanced and developing economies. The baseline scenario assumes that, notwithstanding the declining exports revenue and remittance inflows from Russia in 2014 and a declining trend in the main commodity prices in the second half of 2014, the Government is employing unorthodox measures to sustain consumption, investment, net exports, and growth. These include a continuation of the Government’s investment program; additional exports of gold; an increase in gas and food exports to China; increases in wages, pensions, and social payments announced at 20
percent nominal by end-2014; the allocation of additional credit to small firms; a reduction of excise taxes on food imports; and marginal improvements in the investment climate. These measures are designed to offset slower export growth in 2014 than in 2013. The Government remains well placed to tackle external demand shocks, with significant fiscal buffers and a conservative policy on foreign borrowing.

**MAJOR INDUSTRY**

**Major Industry**

Uzbek-South Korean Business Forum(28-Feb-14)

Business forum of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Korea has taken place in the capital Tashkent.

The event was organized jointly by Uzbekistan’s Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, Investments and Trade, the Fund for the Support for Small Business and Private Entrepreneurship Entities, as well as the Korea International Trade Association. The two nations’ business circles sought to examine the ways toward intensification of the trade-economic and investment cooperation.

The occasion was attended by heads of ministries and other government agencies, companies and corporations of the two countries dealing with foreign economic ties, trade, investments, construction industry, mechanical engineering, agriculture and water resources management, food industry, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, geology and mineral resources, transport and transport communications, information technologies, electrical engineering, tourism, chemical and light industries, fuel and energy sector.

The Deputy Minister of Foreign Economic Relations, Investments and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Tulaganov, Chairman of the Trade and Industry Chamber Alisher Shaikhov, the acting director of the Fund for the Support for Small Business and Private Entrepreneurship Entities Jahongir Mustafaev, Deputy Chairperson of the Korea International Trade Association Ahn Hyunho noted in particular that the cooperation between our two countries has been advancing steadily in all spheres in line with agreements reached during meetings between the two heads of state. President Islam Karimov’s state visit to the Republic of Korea in September 2012 helped enrich the interaction between our two nations with new substance and uplift the cooperation to a qualitatively new level.
The Republic of Korea is a reliable and long-term strategic partner of Uzbekistan. The two countries enjoy the most-favorable-nation regime in trade. The total volume of investments made into the Uzbek economy for cooperation years has exceeded 5 billion US dollars.

Representative offices of 78 South Korean firms and companies are open in Uzbekistan. 418 joint ventures founded with the involvement of investors from that country operate in our nation. Spheres they operate include trade, tourism, mining, machine building, metal reprocessing, healthcare, transport services, textiles and light, chemical and food industries. In 2013, the volume of bilateral trade turnover exceeded 2.1 billion US dollars. The enormous economic potential, modern transport communications, favorable business environment in Uzbekistan, along with many other countries, raise the willingness of business circles of the Republic of Korea for cooperation. A number of projects have been run in our country with an active participation of South Korean businesspeople. Notably, the Ustyurt Gas Chemical Complex is being erected at the Surgil deposit, and a new textile complex is being established in Tashkent region.

“Uzbekistan is one of the leading countries in Central Asia,” AhnHyunho says. “The bilateral relations have been developing consistently in such areas as commerce, economy, investments, mechanical engineering, petrochemical and chemical industries, and the volume of mutual trade has been growing persistently. A range of joint projects are in progress among businesspeople of the two countries. In particular, our entrepreneurs have been energetic in the Navoi Free Industrial and Economic Zone, suggesting that the mutual cooperation has been quite steadfast. We advocate further consolidation of partnership with Uzbekistan.”

Entrepreneurs from the Republic of Korea were familiarized in depth at the forum with the socio-economic reforms being undertaken in our country, as well as the attention being paid to the development of small business and private entrepreneurship, the privileges and preferences created in the Navoi Free Industrial and Economic Zone, the special industrial zones in Jizzakh and Angren, and with the activities of South Korean companies successfully operating in Uzbekistan.

The forum was used as a good platform to exchange views with representatives of more than thirty major South Korean companies on boosting the effectiveness in making use of the economic potential and opportunities of the two countries. The two sides discussed issues pertaining to the promotion of cooperation in
commerce, economy, investments, construction industry, mechanical engineering, energy sector, electrical engineering and chemical industry, as well as the extensive engagement of companies from the Republic of Korea to the process of privatization spearheaded in our country.

“We fund projects in a variety of economic sectors,” says Gallant Alan, President of the UBI Group, UBI Soft, UBI Capital Group (South Korea). “Uzbekistan is a country conducive for investing. In particular, what is noteworthy is that broad opportunities for the implementation of numerous projects are created in the Angren special industrial zone. We support enthusiastic participation in the establishment of high-tech enterprises and funding major schemes in tourism industry.”

Toward the end of the forum, the Fund for the Support for Small Business and Private Entrepreneurship Entities of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Korea International Trade Association signed a memorandum on understanding.

Representatives of a range of companies and enterprises of Uzbekistan and the business circles of the Republic of Korea attended a cooperation exchange. The event served to exchange views on the realization of mutually advantageous projects with the involvement of entrepreneurs from the two nations.

As part of the visit, the guests traveled to the Angren special industrial zone. They got familiarized with the activities of AngrenKuvur and AngrenShakar plants, the enterprise EGL-NUR that specializes in the production of light-emitting diode lamps, along with the Angren international logistics center.

**Mining and Minerals:** In both the Soviet and the post-Soviet eras, minerals and mining have been a foundation of the economy. In 2005 Uzbekistan had the world’s sixth largest reserves of gold and ranked ninth in world production. Annual production, estimated at 80 to 85 tons, accounts for 10 to 20 percent of export earnings. Uzbekistan’s natural gas reserves satisfy all domestic needs and are an important export product, and oil reserves are nearly sufficient for domestic needs. Significant reserves of copper, lead, tungsten, uranium, and zinc also are present.

**Industry and Manufacturing:** In the early 2000s, all of Uzbekistan’s large industrial enterprises remained state-owned, and many unproductive Soviet-era plants remained in operation. Beginning in the late 1990s, planners have given priority to import-substitution industrialization with investment and trade protection for industries such as steel production and sugar processing, but in
general such industries have not prospered and have incurred substantial debt. The UzDaewoo automobile assembly plant, which the state took over when its joint venture partner, the South Korean Daewoo Group, folded in 2006, is Uzbekistan’s first domestic automotive industry. In 2005 the plant’s output was 100,000 vehicles per year, but the small domestic consumer base has prevented utilization of full capacity. Another important industry, cigarette manufacturing, has been affected by large-scale cigarette smuggling into Uzbekistan. Other industries are food processing, cotton textiles, machine building, metallurgy, and Chemicals. Uzbekistan’s construction industry receive relatively little investment. Aside from the upgrading of airports, there are few large-scale construction projects. However, the introduction of a mortgage programming 2005 could increase the housing construction sector.

**Energy:** In the 1990s, Uzbekistan became self-sufficient in fuels, although the fuel industries have remained inefficient and wasteful. The smuggling of oil into neighboring countries has led to periodic domestic oil shortages. In 1999 oil production reached a peak of 8.1 million metric tons before declining to 5.4 million metric tons in 2005. In the post-Soviet era, Uzbekistan has increased its production of natural gas by an estimated 40 to 50 percent, reaching 60 billion cubic meters in 2005. Gas exports go primarily to neighboring countries, minimizing concerns about long-distance pipelines. In 2002 a production-sharing agreement with a British company, Trinity Gas, began developing gas fields in central Uzbekistan, and subsequent Russian investments have substantially increased gas output. For 2007 Uzbekistan significantly raised its price for natural gas sold to Kyrgyzstan and Russia. Uzbekistan also is self-sufficient in electric power. However, because infrastructure is in poor condition in the 37 operating power stations and their distribution networks, experts estimate that sometime after 2006 Uzbekistan no longer will produce a net surplus of electric power. Uzbekistan is scheduled to be a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s Asian Energy Club, which Russia proposed in 2006 to unify oil, gas, and electricity producers, consumers, and transit countries in the Central Asian region in a bloc that is self-sufficient in energy. Other members would be China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

**Services:** The services sector grew substantially in the early 2000s, mainly because of increased contributions from small private enterprises such as retail stores, restaurants, and computer technology. Government restrictions on consumer goods imports and licensing restrictions on retail commerce have forced many of Uzbekistan’s numerous small-scale traders (both legitimate and black-market) into neighboring countries and reduced the availability of consumer goods.
The development of financial services has been restricted by government controls on the banking industry, which serves only as a distributor of government credit and loans. The National Bank of Uzbekistan is the dominant provider of both domestic and foreign loans. The five largest banks control more than 80 percent of capital. A few small private banks are in operation. The new mortgage program of 2005 has the potential to increase personal loans. The Tashkent Stock Exchange has very limited operations.

Uzbekistan has desirable tourist destinations in the ancient Silk Road cities of Bukhoro, Khiva, and Samarqand, and the travel infrastructure is adequate. However, visa and customs restrictions, corruption in the local tourism industry, and low investment have inhibited development of the tourism industry.

**Labor:** In 2005 the labor force was estimated at 14.3 million people, of whom 44 percent were working in agriculture, 36 percent in services, and 20 percent in industry and manufacturing. The official unemployment rate was 0.7 percent, but actual unemployment was believed to be about 6 percent. Approximately another 20 percent were estimated to be underemployed. In 2005 the monthly minimum wage increased from US$6.40 to US$7.80. Agricultural workers receive especially low wages. Unemployment and low wages have caused a significant number of Uzbekistani workers to seek employment illegally in Kazakhstan.

**Foreign Economic Relations:** An important factor in post-Soviet economic relations has been Uzbekistan’s policy of import substitution, which has focused on increased production of wheat, natural gas, and oil. Despite that policy, however, the purchase of capital equipment for investment projects has remained a significant component of import growth. Throughout the post-Soviet period, the most important export commodities have been cotton and gold. The export share of cotton decreased in the early 2000s; the state does not release statistics on the export of gold, but extraction operations appear to remain steady. State controls on imports, one measure to improve the trade balance, have increased the smuggling of consumer products into Uzbekistan. Throughout the post-Soviet period, Russia has remained the top partner for both exports and imports. Other former Soviet republics maintaining substantial trade relations with Uzbekistan are Tajikistan and Ukraine. In 2005 Uzbekistan joined the Eurasian Economic Community, which also includes Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan. That step was an exception to Uzbekistan’s usual preference for bilateral trade agreements. In the early 2000s, natural gas was the main commodity export to those republics. A significant trade event of 2005 was the signing of a gas pipeline agreement with China, worth an estimated US$600 million. Uzbekistan’s restrictivetraderegulations have prevented membership in the World Trade Organization.
**Imports:** In 2005 the main imports, in order of value, were machinery, chemicals and plastics, foods, and metals. In 2005 the value of imports increased by 30 percent; the most important import source countries, in order of trade volume, were Russia, South Korea, Germany, China, Kazakhstan, Turkey, and Ukraine.

**Exports:** In 2005 Uzbekistan’s main exports, in order of value, were cotton fiber, gold, fuels, metals, food products, and machinery. In 2005 the value of exports increased by about one-third. The main customers in order of trade volume were Russia, China, Turkey, Ukraine, Bangladesh, Poland, and Tajikistan, as the volume of sales to customers outside the former Soviet Union increased significantly.

**Trade Balance:** Because of heavy dependence on two export commodities, world cotton and gold prices have been major factors in determining Uzbekistan’s annual trade balance, and variations in those prices have caused sharp swings in that balance. In 2005 exports totaled US$5 billion and imports US$3.8 billion, creating a trade surplus of US$1.2 billion. In 2004 the value of exports was about US$3.7 billion and the value of imports was about US$2.8 billion, resulting in a trade surplus of US$900 million.

**Balance of Payments:** Complete statistics on Uzbekistan’s balance of payments have not been available since 1998, when the balance was approximately zero. Although exports and imports both grew in the post-Soviet era, in most years before 2000 the more rapid growth of imports left Uzbekistan with a large current account deficit. However, beginning in 2000 that balance has been increasingly positive, reaching US$773 million in 2004. In 2005, the fourth consecutive year of surplus, it grew to an estimated US$1.1 billion.

**Mass Media:** Although a government decree officially eliminated state censorship in 2002, the government has continued to severely restrict independent journalism, particularly following the Andijon uprising of 2005. Licensing and regulation are the purview of the State Press Committee and the Inter-Agency Coordination Committee, which use their authority to harass and delay the activities of independent media outlets. In late 2006, authorities further tightened state control by requiring re-registration by all media outlets not passing a summary review of qualifications. In 2005 some 30 to 40 independent television stations and seven independent radio stations were in operation, but four state-owned television stations, run by the Television and Radio Company of Uzbekistan, dominated the market. No live programming is allowed. Total newspaper readership is estimated at only 50,000; the newspaper market is dominated by the state-owned papers *Pravda Vostoka, HalqSozi,* and...
The largest privately owned papers are *NovostiUzbekistana*, *NoviyVek*, *Noviy Den’*, and *Mohiyat*. The state controls newspaper distribution and materials supply. In the early 2000s, newspaper articles occasionally have criticized government policy and social conditions, but bribery of journalists is common. The only national news agency, the Uzbekistan News-Agency, is state-controlled. Agence France-Presse, AnadoluAjansı (of Turkey), the Associated Press, Interfax (of Russia), and Reuters are foreign agencies with offices in Uzbekistan. The government forced Radio Free Europe–Radio Liberty to close its Tashkent office in late 2005. In early 2006, a new media law placed further restrictions on the activities of foreign news organizations in Uzbekistan.

**OPEN MARKETVIEW METHODOLOGY**

Uzbekistan’s average tariff rate is 5.1 percent. Uzbekistan is not yet a member of the WTO. The government screens foreign investment. Foreign investors may not purchase land. The financial sector is subject to heavy state intervention. Along with the high costs of financing, the banking sector’s limited capacity for financial intermediation is a key barrier to private-sector development.

**EDUCATION IN UZBEKISTAN**

Uzbekistan’s education system outperforms peer countries in the lower-middle-income group. Public spending on education is high; pupil-teacher ratios in Uzbekistan are closer to those found in rich countries, and gender parity is nearly achieved in primary education. Currently, an estimated 35 percent of the national budget goes to education expenditures.

Uzbekistan has a high Literacy rate with about 88% of adults above the age of 15 being able to read and write. However with only 76% of the under 15 population currently enrolled in education this figure may drop in the future. Uzbekistan has encountered severe budgeting shortfalls in its education program. The education law of 1992 began the process of Theoretical reform, but the physical base has deteriorated, and curriculum revision has been slow.

Nine-year general secondary education in Uzbekistan is compulsory and free. It is divided into primary (grades 1–4) and secondary (grades 5–9) education. Preschool education is provided to children until they are aged six–seven at state or private preschool educational establishments, and also within the family. In 2004, the Government adopted the School Education Development Program (SEDP) for 2004–09 to improve the conditions of school buildings and learning resources and equipment in schools. Donor financing also provided support to SEDP,
including textbooks, information and communications technology (ICT), distance education, teacher training, equipment, and learning materials. SEDP covered the rehabilitation, reconstruction, and construction of almost 8,500 schools.

**World Bank involvement in Uzbekistan’s education sector** started with the two-phased Basic Education Project that covers 2007–14. The project provided support to implement interventions in the education sector, including piloting and supporting several new initiatives:

- A new mode of engagement with the Government, whereby communities are more closely and directly involved in project design and implementation;
- A new standardized national assessment of student learning;
- A new school-based approach to teacher training;
- A new approach to school financing (per capita financing).

The project had significant achievements in the areas of assessing student learning, preparing for new teacher training, activating school boards, and especially implementing per capita financing. It is proposed to share the successful experience of Uzbek experts in implementing per capita financing with other governments.

In 2012, at the request of the Government of Uzbekistan, the World Bank started to explore options for partnership in the higher education sector. In 2013, the Bank prepared an analytical study of the higher education sector in close cooperation with the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education. The report, “Uzbekistan: Modernizing Tertiary Education,” was published in 2014. The analytical study focuses on measures to improve the quality and relevance of the higher education system to meet the needs of a rapidly modernizing economy. The Bank has carried out an exploratory dialogue on preparing a project to support higher education that would focus on improving quality assurance processes at higher education institutions and at system levels and on fostering linkages with industry and foreign universities.

In Uzbekistan, twelve years of primary and secondary education are obligatory, starting at age seven. This requirement includes four years of primary school and two cycles of secondary school, lasting five and three years, respectively. The rate of attendance in those grades is high, although the figure is significantly lower in
rural areas than in urban centers. Preschool registration has decreased significantly since 1991.

The official literacy rate is 99 percent. However, in the post-Soviet era educational standards have fallen. Funding and training have not been sufficient to effectively educate the expanding younger cohorts of the population. Between 1992 and 2004, government spending on education dropped from 12 percent to 6.3 percent of gross domestic product. In 2006 education’s share of the budget increased to 8.1 percent. Lack of budgetary support has been more noticeable at the primary and secondary levels, as the government has continued to subsidize university students.

Between 1992 and 2001, university attendance dropped from 19 percent of the college-age population to 6.4 percent. The three largest of Uzbekistan’s 63 institutions of higher learning are in Nukus, Samarkand, and Tashkent. All are state-funded. Private schools have been forbidden since the establishment of Islamic fundamentalist (Wahhabi) schools in the early 1990s brought a government crackdown. However, in 1999 the government-supported Taskhent Islamic University was founded for the teaching of Islam.

Among higher educational institutions, the highest rated at domestic level are Tashkent Financial Institute and Westminster International University in Tashkent. The first one was established by the decree of President Islam Karimov in 1991. Latter, in 2002 Westminster International University in Tashkent was established in collaboration with the University of Westminster (UK) and “UMID” Foundation of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Currently these universities are regarded as the best in its sphere of education both in Uzbekistan and Central Asia countries.

In the year 2010 The British School of Tashkent <www.britishschool.uz> was established to provide a vibrant, high achieving British school where children develop a love of learning in a secure and stimulating environment and children of all nationalities are exposed to a multitude of fantastic opportunities through the English National Curriculum. The school is also able to deliver all local Uzbek curriculum requirements to provide local students with the best possible start to their education in Uzbekistan.

**Universities of Uzbekistan**

- Andijan
- Andijan State Medical Institute
- **Bukhara**
  - Bukhara State Medical Institute
  - Bukhara State University
  - Bukhara Engineering Institute of High Technology

- **Samarkand**
  - Samarkand State University
  - Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages
  - Samarkand State Medical Institute
  - Samarkand State Institute of Economics and Service
  - Samarkand State Institute of Architecture and Construction
  - Samarkand State Institute of Agriculture
  - Institute of Archaeology of the Science Academy of Uzbekistan (in Samarkand)

- **Tashkent**
  - National University of Uzbekistan
  - Tashkent Architectural Building Institute
  - Tashkent Institute of Finance
  - Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Melioration
  - Tashkent State University of Law
  - Tashkent State Agrarian University
  - Tashkent University of Information Technologies
  - Tashkent State University of Economics
  - Management Development Institute of Singapore (overseas campus in Tashkent)
  - Westminster International University in Tashkent
  - Moscow National University in Tashkent
  - University of World Economy and Diplomacy
  - Uzbekistan State University of World Languages

- **Others**
  - Karshi engineering-economics institute
  - Namangan State University
  - Urgench State University

**EMPLOYMENT**

Uzbekistan plans to create 987.5 thousand jobs in 2015
The sixteenth plenary session of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan was held in Tashkent on November 13, 2014. In the course of the session, the senators considered and approved the Program for creating workplaces and ensuring employment of population for 2015.

As was noted, the program is based on the requirements of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On employment of population", principles and priorities of state policy in the field of employment, relevant programs and international standards.

According to the Program, in 2015 the country will provide the establishment of 987.5 thousands of jobs, including 261.6 thousands jobs in accordance with the target programs for the development of industry, services, agriculture and restoration of inactive enterprises and employment of 725.9 thousands of people in small enterprises and microfirms in the field of individual businesses, farms and dehkan farms. Special attention will be paid to the creation of jobs in remote areas of the country.

At that, it is planned to employ 487.7 thousands of graduates of professional colleges for created in accordance with the parameters of the program new workplaces, as well as vacant and redundant jobs.

In order to ensure quality implementation of the approved parameters of the Program of creating workplaces and ensuring employment of the population, a systematic and regular monitoring of its implementation in districts and cities, industries and enterprises will be organized.


**TOURIST ATTRACTION**

Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, and Shakhrizabs, where cultural and spiritual values had been long since concentrated, outstanding scientific centers and schools were established, architecture, craftsmanship, and applied art were flourishing, played the role of main urban centres. Creative work and various scientific achievements of the local scientists, thinkers, and poets have proved to be a valuable contribution to the development of the world civilization. Abu Ali ibn Sino, al-Khorezmii, Mirzo Ulugbek, Bakhouddin Nakshband, al-Bukhori, at-Termeziy, Abu Raikhun Beruniy, Alisher Navoiy - this is but a short list of names of prominent figures of Uzbekistan.
Uzbekistan, where monuments of ancient cultures of different ages are concentrated, is rightly called a treasury of history. Ichan-Kala complex in Khiva, historical centers of Bukhara, Shakhrizabs and Samarkand are included in the UNESCO World Heritage list. Many unique monuments and architectural constructions in these towns have remained in a good state up to the present day and are of a great significance to the mankind.

The monuments of Samarkand are majestic and wonderful. In this town one can feel the breath of history itself. It can be traced in the ancient ruins as well as in the medrassahs, mausoleums, and minarets, which have been decorating the city until now. In 1370 Amir Timur (Tamerlan) designated Samarkand as the capital of his great state that spread from Mongolia and Siberia to Syria and India. From his campaigns he brought many skillful architects and craftsmen whose works of art have outlasted the ages. The legendary Samarkand square of Registan has up to now been considered to be one of the main architectural sights of Central Asia.
Since old times **Bukhara** was the center of a densely populated oasis. Archeologists noted that the city was constantly growing, both in width and in height. Ruins of dwellings, public buildings, defense structures dating back to different periods of the city's history were found in the earth stratum at the depth of 20 meters. There are more than 140 monuments of ancient architecture in **Bukhara** altogether. Minaret Kalyan, the striking symbol of the city, towers over it. Everyone who has seen "Great Minaret" built in 1127 will long keep in memory the impression of its greatness and original beauty.

Having once visited **Bukhara**, you will long stay under impression both of Ark fortress and many other monuments of antiquity, which surround you almost everywhere. Craftsmen-chasers will reproduce ancient patterns on copper and silver right before your eyes, jewellers will make replicas of unique adornments, which the beauties used to wear thousands of years ago. Involuntarily you ask yourself: how many centuries has this town numbered? How many pieces of the past material cultures are buried in it?

**Khiva** is the only town of the period of the **Great Silk Road**, which has remained fully undamaged till now. Time seems to go centuries back here. That is why the town has rightly gained fame of "the museum in the open". In **Khiva** with its narrow alleys where legends of old times seem to have been reflected in stone and wood, you can easily imagine the life of former generations which will not repeat itself but has left us old traditions, legends, and precepts.
Most of architectural monuments of Ichan-Kala complex in Khiva date back to the late 18th - first half of the 19th centuries. But the excavations on its territory revealed much more ancient layers dating back to the 3rd and even earlier centuries B.C. Ichan-Kala is surrounded by a thick wall which is 2100 meters long and has several gates. The silhouette of the huge Islam-Khodzha minaret stands out over the town.

Shakhrizyabs is the birthplace of Amir Temur where everything, one way or another, is connected with his name. Having established the Movarrounnakhrempire, having become an absolute ruler - emir, Timur designated Samarkand as his capital. But he always remembered and took care of his hometown. In fact, Shakhrizyabs was the second capital of the empire. Many beautiful constructions appeared here in the times the Timurids. Best architects, construction workers, masters of architectural decoration were sent here by the emir's orders. Alongside with the local masters they built majestic
constructions thus realizing the experience and traditions of different countries.

Ancient monuments on the territory of the present-day Uzbekistan are put on the list of the values of the world civilization. These monuments situated along the **Great Silk Road** traditionally attract attention of the general public: both specialists who study the Orient and international relations of the ancient world and ordinary people who seek after knowledge of the unknown world.

**Tashkent**, the capital of the present-day Uzbekistan, is one of the biggest cities of Central Asia and is called "Star of the Orient" and "Messenger of Peace". These names amazingly reflect the very essence of the city, which for more than 20 centuries has been symbolically illuminating with the light of peace and kindness the lives of both its inhabitants and the road for travelers.

Tashkent is rich in archeological monuments. None of Central Asian towns has been studied so thoroughly by scientists as the capital of Uzbekistan. Only ten years ago there were 39 known archeological monuments on the territory of the city, whereas today there have been excavated more than 240 monuments. In the past Tashkent had different names: Yuni, Chach, Shash, Binkent. Its present name was first introduced in the 11th century works by Beruniy and Makhmud Kashgariy.

The architectural look of old Tashkent has been developing for centuries, both under the influence of many-sided Oriental culture and due to natural factors. The urge for the ways to protection from hot climate and earthquakes gave rise to peculiar know-hows in construction. There appeared interesting types of dwellings with covered yards, sliding shutters "keshgarcha". Residential areas with a maze of
narrow alleys formed the environment for standing out mosques, madrassahs, and mazars (cemeteries).

Today **Tashkent** is a large industrial center with about 300 companies producing almost everything which contemporary person needs: from aircraft and tractors to TV sets and toys for children. Here the images of old times join the modern skyscrapers made of glass and metal, multilevel overbridges, parks, museums, fountains. **Tashkent** is rapidly becoming a modern developed international megapolis.

Many-sidedness of the history of **Uzbekistan** is brightly reflected in its geographical location. Termez, located in the very south of the country can serve a good example of this. It came into being at the end of 19th century and had the appearance of a typical semi-Asian semi-European town. It was a one-storied town, with public buildings made of baked bricks and dwellings made of adobe, with flat roofs in Oriental style and windows facing the street in Western mode, in greenery of gardens, with customary acacias, elms and planes along the pavements. Today Termez is a modern town, the center of Surkhandarya Viloyat (Province).

Many years of scientific study have revealed that this peaceful and quiet town has a long and eventful history. It was in Surkhandarya region that the most famous **Central Asian** sites of primitive man were found. The territory of Surkhandarya region was a part of many states: the empire of Alexander the Great, Bactria, the empire of Chenghiz-Khan and Amir Temur, sharing with each its fate. Archeologists use to find the unique traces of their might and power. Founded on the right bank of the Jeyhun River (the Amudrya River) at a convenient crossing place, at a crossroads of caravan routes of the **Great Silk Road**, 5 km north-west from the present-day Termez, Old Termez had in centuries time become one of the leading towns. Later it was destroyed by hostile raids and internal wars.
The name "Pearl of Central Asia" has been positively attributed to rich and picturesque Fergana Valley, which always played a significant role in the history and culture of Central Asia. Fergana Valley is truly a unique part of the Orient. In ancient times the valley was the center of various civilizations, which is proved by evidence of antic settlements and monuments of the Middle Ages.

Today Fergana Valley is the most flourishing region of the country. The astonishing nature enchants with a variety of colors. The Sirdarya River, formed by the Karadarya and the Naryn River, flows along the northern border of the valley. These rivers feed main canals: the Big Canal, the Northern Canal and Southern Canal, which appeared on the map of the region as a result of national construction projects of the 20th century.

Fergana Valley, the big and flourishing oasis with the most fertile land in Central Asia, where the towns of Fergana, Kokand, Andizhan, Namangan are situated, is rightly called "Golden Valley".

Uzbekistan comprises an autonomous republic Karakalpakstan most part of which is the territory of the Kizyl-Kum desert, plateau Usturt, the delta of the Amudarya River and the southern part of the Aral Sea. The most ancient settlements here date back to the Stone Age.

The Karakalpaks belong to the Central Asian ethnic groups with bold Mongoloid features. Earlier they led semi-nomadic life, practiced agriculture, cattle breeding and fishing. For the most part they lived in yurts (nomadic temporary houses). In spite of the fact that today the native customs are being kept only by the old
generation, the signs of ancient traditions can be traced in the house interiors, clothing, food, peculiar applied art.

Nukus, the capital of Karakalpakstan, is a beautiful modern town, the center of economic and cultural life of the republic. Everyone who is visiting Nukus should certainly see Karakalpakstan State Museum of Art named after its founder, the famous artist Igor Savitskiy. The museum displays not only works of painters but also a wide variety of local artifacts found in the region, which attest to continuity of cultures. Karakalpakstan truly proves to be a vivid example of times correlation. Beautiful and tempting, promising surprising meetings and discoveries, it is ready to impart its mysteries and share its legends.

Uzbekistan today is the country where thousands-old antiquity exists in harmony with modern civilization. Harmonious correlation of times is seen everywhere. Ancient monuments, Old Town houses made of adobe bricks stand next to many-storied sky scraping buildings constructed in accordance with the unique designs worked out by architects of the 20th century. The traditions of the people are being carefully preserved.

Arts and crafts have been developing here throughout the centuries; their secrets have been passed from generation to generation as great treasure. The unique works of unknown masters strike you dumb by the flight of fancy. In the present-day Uzbekistan traditional cultural values are being treated with great care, the state supports revival of the arts and crafts, contributing to their further development. Uzbek ceramics, embossing, wood carving, golden embroidery, carpets, varnished miniature, jewelry are well known far outside our country.
Non-material heritage is not less unique and has been acknowledged by UNESCO. For example, the folklore singing of Baysun district, Surkhandarya Province, Uzbekistan, is included as a cultural object in UNESCO list to be protected by the international community. Melodiousness and oriental rhythms of ritual songs and musical compositions sung and played in other regions of the country are amazing too.

The institution of family remains firm in Uzbekistan. It is considered one of the most important values of life. Uzbekistan is notable for the world's lowest divorce rate. As a rule, Uzbek families have many children, especially in the rural areas, where women are mostly housewives. They combine housework with arts and crafts such as hand-spinning, embroidery, carpet weaving. Their works are common in any local house, which Uzbek women usually decorate with great love. The settled way of life made people look after their houses very carefully. Inner yards and even the streets next to houses are kept very clean.

Nowadays, along with the clothing of European style the Uzbeks wear national clothing, especially on holidays. Men usually wear striped quilted robe, belted with a beautiful sash, and a skullcap to cover their heads. Women wear loose bright dresses made of traditional fabrics: khan-atlas, bekasam, kalami.

The dishes of National Uzbek cuisine are notable not only for their practicability but for certain skills required for their cooking. Unique Uzbek pilaf, aromatic transparent shurpa (soup), juicy manti made of dough bags and meat, shashlyk with its smack of smoke and spices are famous all over the world. It would be unthinkable to have a dastarkhan (table-cloth) without greens, vegetables, fruit, sun-fed melons and bunches of grapes. Melting on the tongue sweets, nuts and
almonds cooked by grandmother's recipes complement the dastarkhan. Green tea is a favorite drink of the Uzbeks. It quenches thirst on a sultry day.

Uzbekistan is truly an amazing land with original national culture where the heritage of ancient times is being carefully preserved and a society with modern economy and developed science and art is being simultaneously built.

In the present-day Uzbekistan a lot is being done so as to restore the unique monuments - witnesses of the country's past; owing to these programmes of restoration and preservation work many of these monuments have been given second birth. Manzara Tourism, the leading tourist company of Uzbekistan acknowledged worldwide, provides travelers with the opportunity of visiting these places and touching the pulse of history.