

# ИЖТИМОЙ ТАДҚИҚОТЛАР ЖУРНАЛИ

3-МАХСУС СОН

ЖУРНАЛ СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ  
СПЕЦИАЛЬНЫЙ НОМЕР-3

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**ИЖТИМОЙ ТАДҚИҚОТЛАР ЖУРНАЛИ**


ЖУРНАЛ СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ | JOURNAL OF SOCIAL STUDIES

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**NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: EVIDENCE FROM UZBEKISTAN** <http://dx.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18099561>**ABSTRACT**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a comprehensive global framework aimed at addressing the most pressing economic, social, and environmental challenges facing humanity. This article examines the role of the SDGs in shaping national development strategies, with a particular focus on Uzbekistan. The study analyzes the process of localizing the SDGs within national policy frameworks and evaluates Uzbekistan's institutional and strategic efforts to align national development priorities with the 2030 Agenda. Special attention is given to key policy documents, including the Action Strategy (2017-2021), the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy (2022-2026), and the "Uzbekistan – 2030" Strategy, which collectively reflect the country's commitment to sustainable development principles. The findings suggest that Uzbekistan has made significant progress in integrating the SDGs into its national development agenda, particularly in areas such as poverty reduction, education, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion. However, persistent global and domestic challenges, including socio-economic inequalities, food insecurity, and limited access to quality education, highlight the need for more coordinated and systemic policy responses to ensure the effective implementation of the SDGs.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Development Goals; National Development; Uzbekistan; Poverty Reduction; Social Inclusion; Environmental Sustainability; Development Strategies

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**MILLIY TARAQQIYOT VA BARQAROR RIVOJLANISH MAQSADLARI:  
O'ZBEKISTON MISOLIDA TAHLIL****ANNOTATSIYA**

Barqaror rivojlanish maqsadlari (BRM) insoniyat taraqqiyotiga to'sqinlik qilayotgan eng dolzarb iqtisodiy, ijtimoiy hamda ekologik muammolarni hal etishga qaratilgan universal va kompleks global konsepsiyani ifodalaydi. Mazkur maqolada BRMlarning milliy rivojlanish strategiyalarini shakllantirishdagi ahamiyati O'zbekiston misolida ilmiy jihatdan tahlil etiladi. Tadqiqot doirasida BRMlarni milliy siyosat tizimiga moslashtirish (lokalizatsiya qilish) jarayoni o'rganilib, O'zbekistonning milliy rivojlanish ustuvor yo'nalishlarini BMTning 2030-yilgacha

mo'ljallangan Barqaror rivojlanish kun tartibi bilan uyg'unlashtirishga qaratilgan institutsional va strategik mexanizmlari baholanadi. Xususan, 2017-2021-yillarga mo'ljallangan Harakatlar strategiyasi, 2022-2026-yillarga mo'ljallangan "Yangi O'zbekiston" taraqqiyot strategiyasi hamda "O'zbekiston – 2030" strategiyasi kabi asosiy normativ-huquqiy va strategik hujjatlar tahlil qilinadi. Ushbu hujjatlar mamlakatda barqaror rivojlanish tamoyillarini izchil joriy etish va milliy rivojlanish siyosatini global maqsadlar bilan muvofiqlashtirish borasidagi qat'iy siyosiy iroda mavjudligini namoyon etadi. Tadqiqot natijalari O'zbekiston BRMLarni milliy rivojlanish kun tartibiga integratsiya qilish yo'lida, xususan kambag'allikni qisqartirish, ta'lim tizimini rivojlantirish, ekologik barqarorlikni ta'minlash hamda ijtimoiy inklyuziv siyosatni kuchaytirish sohalarida muayyan ijobiy natijalarga erishganini ko'rsatadi. Shu bilan birga, ijtimoiy-iqtisodiy tengsizliklarning saqlanib qolishi, oziq-ovqat xavfsizligi muammolari hamda sifatli ta'limdan foydalanish imkoniyatlarining cheklanganligi kabi global va milliy miqyosdagi dolzarb masalalar BRMLarni samarali amalga oshirish uchun yanada tizimli, muvofiqlashtirilgan va kompleks siyosiy yondashuvlarni talab etishini ko'rsatmoqda.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Barqaror rivojlanish maqsadlari; milliy rivojlanish siyosati; O'zbekiston; kambag'allikni qisqartirish; ijtimoiy inklyuziya; ekologik barqarorlik; rivojlanish strategiyalari.

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## НАЦИОНАЛЬНОЕ РАЗВИТИЕ И ЦЕЛИ УСТОЙЧИВОГО РАЗВИТИЯ: АНАЛИЗ НА ПРИМЕРЕ УЗБЕКИСТАНА

### АННОТАЦИЯ

Цели устойчивого развития (ЦУР) представляют собой универсальную и комплексную глобальную концепцию, направленную на решение наиболее актуальных экономических, социальных и экологических проблем, сдерживающих развитие человечества. В данной статье анализируется роль ЦУР в формировании стратегий национального развития на примере Республики Узбекистан. В рамках исследования рассматривается процесс адаптации (локализации) ЦУР в системе национальной политики, а также оцениваются институциональные и стратегические механизмы, направленные на согласование приоритетных направлений национального развития Узбекистана с Повесткой дня в области устойчивого развития на период до 2030 года, принятой Организацией Объединённых Наций. Особое внимание уделяется анализу ключевых нормативно-правовых и стратегических документов, включая Стратегию действий на 2017-2021 годы, Стратегию развития «Новый Узбекистан» на 2022-2026 годы, а также Стратегию «Узбекистан – 2030». Указанные документы свидетельствуют о наличии последовательной государственной политики и твёрдой политической воли, направленных на поэтапное внедрение принципов устойчивого развития и согласование национальной политики развития с глобальными целями. Результаты исследования показывают, что Узбекистан достиг определённых положительных результатов в интеграции ЦУР в национальную повестку развития, в частности в таких сферах, как сокращение бедности, развитие системы образования, обеспечение экологической устойчивости и усиление инклюзивной социальной политики. Вместе с тем сохранение социально-экономического неравенства, проблемы продовольственной безопасности, а также ограниченный доступ к качественному образованию на глобальном и национальном уровнях указывают на необходимость более системных, скоординированных и комплексных политических подходов для эффективной реализации ЦУР.

**Ключевые слова:** цели устойчивого развития; национальная политика развития; Узбекистан; сокращение бедности; социальная инклюзия; экологическая устойчивость; стратегии развития.

## INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) constitute a global framework for collective action aimed at addressing the most pressing economic, social, and environmental challenges facing humanity in the contemporary world [1]. Designed as a universal call to action, the SDGs seek to improve quality of life and overall human well-being through balanced and inclusive development across economic, social, and environmental dimensions, thereby contributing to the construction of a just and sustainable society [2].

Although the SDGs are universal in scope and apply to all countries under the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, their objectives and targets are formulated in a general manner, allowing for national adaptation. Consequently, considerable variation exists in the degree to which countries have integrated the SDGs into their national development policies [3].

This variation underscores the importance of localizing the SDGs by aligning them with national priorities, institutional capacity, and available financial resources, while drawing upon the 169 targets outlined in the 2030 Agenda.

For Uzbekistan, the SDGs represent not merely an international obligation but a strategic roadmap for ensuring sustainable national development, promoting social justice, and safeguarding the well-being of future generations. Over the past decade, Uzbekistan has undertaken wide-ranging reforms aimed at integrating the SDGs into national development strategies, achieving notable progress in poverty reduction, education reform, healthcare improvement, and environmental sustainability. This article examines Uzbekistan's experience in implementing the SDGs, assessing achievements, remaining challenges, and future policy implications.

## METHODOLOGY

The study employs a qualitative analytical approach based on the review and synthesis of official government documents, national statistical data, and reports produced by international organizations, including the United Nations [4], World Bank [5], UNDP [6], UNESCO [7], WHO [8], ILO [9], FAO [10], and OECD [11]. Key national policy frameworks – such as the Action Strategy for 2017–2021, the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for 2022–2026, and the “Uzbekistan – 2030” Strategy – serve as primary sources for evaluating institutional and policy alignment with the SDGs [12].

In addition, the study draws on quantitative indicators related to poverty reduction, employment, education, labor migration, health care, and international rankings to assess progress toward SDG targets. Comparative and descriptive analysis is used to identify trends, measure outcomes, and highlight gaps between policy objectives and implementation results.

## MAIN PART

### Localization of the SDGs in Uzbekistan

To institutionalize the SDGs, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted Resolution No. 841 on October 20, 2018, “On Measures to Implement National Goals and Targets in the Field of Sustainable Development up to 2030” [13]. Based on this resolution, a national SDG framework was developed, comprising 16 national goals, 125 targets, and 206 indicators reflecting the country's development priorities.

The implementation of the SDGs has been further reinforced through strategic policy documents, including the Action Strategy for 2017–2021, the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for 2022–2026 [14], and the “Uzbekistan – 2030” Strategy [15]. These documents emphasize improving public welfare, ensuring sustainable economic growth, and protecting natural resources, thereby providing a coherent policy foundation for SDG achievement.

### Poverty Reduction and Employment Policies

Poverty remains one of the most pressing global challenges, affecting billions of people across all regions. Despite significant progress in reducing extreme poverty over the past few decades, global inequality, conflict, climate change, and economic instability continue to exacerbate the problem. According to the World Bank [16], approximately **770 million people worldwide live on less than \$2.15 per day**, representing extreme poverty. Poverty not only limits access to basic needs such as food, clean water, healthcare, and education but also undermines social cohesion, human rights, and

sustainable development. Global poverty reduction has slowed to a near standstill, with 2020–30 set to be a lost decade. Today, 8.5 percent of the world lives in extreme poverty (those living on less than \$2.15 per person per day. At a poverty standard more relevant for upper-middle income countries \$6.85 per person per day, 44 percent of the world's population lives in poverty). At the current pace of progress, it would take decades to eradicate extreme poverty and more than a century to lift people above \$6.85 per day [17].

Over the past decade, Uzbekistan has implemented extensive reforms aimed at reducing poverty and expanding employment opportunities. A major milestone was the adoption of the National Social Protection Strategy for 2022–2030, which strengthened governance and institutional capacity within the social protection system. New specialized agencies were established, and coordination mechanisms were enhanced to improve policy implementation [18].

One of the most significant reforms was the introduction of the Single Registry of Social Protection, which expanded the coverage of social assistance programs. As a result, the number of beneficiary households increased from approximately 600,000 to 2.5 million, covering around 4.4 million children [19]. Parallel efforts focused on labor market development. Job creation programs and labor market activation measures were expanded significantly. According to official data, plans for 2024 included the creation of millions of jobs across services, agriculture, construction, and investment-driven projects [20]. These measures contributed to a substantial decline in poverty levels, with the national poverty rate decreasing from 17 percent in 2021 to 8.9 percent in 2024 [21].

#### Labor Migration and Remittances

Labor migration from Uzbekistan has become a life strategy for millions of people since the country gained its independence. Factors such as ethnic, political, social, gender considerations and expectations about improving the quality of life in the home country remain driving factors behind this phenomenon. Despite progress in domestic employment, labor migration remains a prominent feature of Uzbekistan's socio-economic landscape. Labor migration from Uzbekistan is primarily seasonal or circular, with male migrants constituting the majority (World Bank, 2023). Remittances have become a vital economic resource for households, contributing to education, healthcare, and daily expenses. More than 1.3 million Uzbek citizens are currently employed abroad, primarily in the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, and Turkey [22].

Prior studies of IOM [23], indicate that labor migration reshapes intra-household power dynamics. Women managing remittances often gain greater autonomy, yet face additional responsibilities. Feminist security and economic development frameworks emphasize that gender perspectives are critical for understanding migration impacts. Remittances accounted for approximately 14 percent of GDP in 2024 and played a critical role in improving household welfare. The remittances sent back by family members working abroad can reduce the economic vulnerability of families left behind. World Bank estimates suggest that without remittances, the poverty rate in Uzbekistan would rise significantly, highlighting the mitigating effect of international labor migration on poverty, despite its social and demographic challenges [24]. Uzbekistan has built a national lifecycle social protection system, with schemes addressing the challenges faced by people across the lifecycle, from childhood to old age. Although Uzbekistan is one of the largest investors in social protection across middle income countries, the design of its system is not aligned to the challenges faced by the country. More families believe that the positive impacts of migration greatly outweigh the negative ones.

#### Education Reforms

A state system of sustainable education, which consists of pre-school, general secondary and primary vocational education, higher and postgraduate education, professional development and retraining, is well-developed in Uzbekistan. Quality education has been designated as one of Uzbekistan's highest national priorities. Since 2017, the government has been working intensively to develop preschool education in Uzbekistan. In this regard, a specialized Ministry of Preschool Education has been created, and the Concept for the Development of Preschool Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030 has been adopted, which serves as a legal basis for implementing reforms in this sphere. Meanwhile, the government is expected to pay a particular attention to

stimulating the involvement of private capital by means of public-private partnership in the sphere, increasing the percentage of children in preschool education to 80.8 % by 2030, and also boosting the coverage of six-year-old children by the preschool training system to 100 % by the end of 2024-2025 academic year. The establishment of the Ministry of Preschool Education led to a dramatic increase in preschool enrollment – from 27 percent in 2016 to over 70 percent in 2024 – enhancing early childhood development and social equity [25].

Over the past six years, the legal framework for improving public education system has been updated, a revised edition of the Law "On Education" has been adopted, the Concept of Development of Public Education in the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030 and more than 20 legal and regulatory acts of the President and the government have been adopted.

The reinstatement of 11-year compulsory general secondary education and the expansion of higher education opportunities resulted in higher education enrollment rising from 9 percent in 2016 to over 28 percent in 2024. These achievements were supported by the establishment of new universities, foreign university branches, digitalized admissions systems, and expanded scholarship and student loan programs.

#### Health Care and Environmental Sustainability

In the twenty-first century, health care systems face unprecedented challenges arising from environmental degradation, climate change, demographic shifts, and global health crises. Environmental sustainability has emerged as a critical determinant of public health, influencing disease patterns, health system resilience, and social well-being. Health care reforms have focused on improving access to quality medical services, particularly in rural and remote areas. Investments in emergency medical infrastructure, advanced medical technologies, and international cooperation have enhanced treatment capacity.

The health care system of Uzbekistan has undergone significant transformation over the past decade as part of broader socio-economic reforms. A healthy environment and its sustainable management are critical for citizens' well-being and supporting Uzbekistan's growing economy. Aimed at improving access, quality, and efficiency, recent policies have focused on strengthening primary health care, expanding health insurance mechanisms, modernizing infrastructure, and enhancing human resources. As for public health, there are both positive and negative trends. There has been a clear improvement in the health of the population of Uzbekistan (e.g., reduction in child mortality or the number of underweight children) and improvement in nutrition through structural ix National State of the Environment Report: Uzbekistan changes in food consumption. At the same time, the probability of dying prematurely from four major groups of noncommunicable diseases—cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, or cancer—for an Uzbek citizen is higher than 1 in 4 (26.9%), with a much higher probability for men (32.9%) than for women (21.4%). [26]. Uzbekistan has updated and strengthened its commitments on GHG emissions under the Paris Agreement for the period up to 2030. At the 26th UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26) in Glasgow, Uzbekistan announced its new climate mitigation target to reduce specific GHG emissions per unit of GDP by 35% by 2030 compared to 2010 levels and reaffirmed its adaptive capacity development goals.

Nonetheless, challenges remain in early disease detection, medical staffing, and diagnostic effectiveness, posing ongoing risks to public health [27]. According to the Ministry of Health, Uzbekistan needs to hire an additional 3000 general practitioners and 10000 specialists nationwide, including paediatricians, therapists, anaesthesiologists, obstetricians-gynaecologists, psychiatrists, radiologists, surgeons, and dentists. It also needs to recruit several thousand nurses, including at least 2000 for the city of Tashkent alone. The situation is even more difficult in some provinces, such as Surkhandarya, Kashkadarya, and Jizzakh, which have about 16-17 medical workers per 10000 inhabitants as compared to 20.5 on average nationwide. By way of comparison, a threshold of 4.45 doctors, nurses and midwives per 7 1000 population was identified by the SDG as an indicative minimum density representing the need for health workers [28].

## DISCUSSION

Uzbekistan's progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) presents a mixed picture, as reflected in the distribution of trend indicators. Approximately 42% of SDG targets are assessed as achieved or on track, indicating meaningful advancement in a substantial share of policy areas. However, 28% of targets exhibit limited progress, suggesting that current efforts are insufficient to ensure timely achievement without accelerated interventions. More concerning, 30% of SDG targets are characterized by worsening trends, [29] highlighting significant structural or implementation challenges that risk undermining overall sustainable development outcomes. Taken together, these patterns underscore the need for targeted policy adjustments, strengthened institutional capacity, and enhanced resource allocation to reverse negative trends and accelerate progress across lagging SDG targets.

Uzbekistan's experience demonstrates that systematic integration of the SDGs into national policy frameworks can yield measurable socio-economic benefits. Progress in poverty reduction, education access, and healthcare provision illustrates the positive outcomes of coordinated reforms. At the same time, persistent challenges – such as labor migration dependency, youth unemployment, inequality, and gaps between education and labor market needs – highlight the complexity of sustainable development.

The interdependence of the SDGs underscores the necessity of integrated policy approaches. For example, improvements in education and health directly influence labor productivity and poverty reduction, while environmental sustainability remains essential for long-term economic resilience. Addressing these interconnected challenges requires stronger institutional coordination and evidence-based policymaking.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Uzbekistan has made substantial progress in localizing and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals through comprehensive reforms in social protection, employment, education, and healthcare. These reforms have contributed not only to improved statistical indicators but also to tangible enhancements in citizens' quality of life, social stability, and public welfare. The country's advancement in international rankings, including its rise to 62nd place in the Sustainable Development Report 2025, reflects the effectiveness of recent policy initiatives [30]. However, sustaining this progress will require continued commitment to integrated, inclusive, and coordinated development strategies. Strengthening the alignment between education and labor markets, addressing migration-related challenges, and enhancing healthcare and environmental resilience remain critical priorities for achieving the SDGs and ensuring long-term sustainable development in Uzbekistan.

To accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals, Uzbekistan should align SDG implementation more closely with the priorities of its Development Strategy 2022–2026 and ongoing structural reforms. Strengthening **inclusive economic growth and social protection**, particularly through labor market formalization, skills development, and targeted support for vulnerable groups, would reinforce national objectives on poverty reduction and human capital development. In line with the country's **green growth and energy transition agenda**, increased investment in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable urban infrastructure is essential to address stagnation in climate action and sustainable cities. Given Uzbekistan's acute environmental challenges, **integrated water resource management and land restoration policies**, aligned with national environmental and agricultural reforms, should be scaled up to improve outcomes related to water security, ecosystems, and climate resilience. Furthermore, advancing **economic diversification and innovation-led industrial development**, consistent with industrial modernization goals, can promote decent work while reducing resource intensity. Finally, enhancing **institutional capacity, policy coherence, and SDG data systems**, including stronger inter-ministerial coordination and monitoring frameworks, will be critical to ensuring that national development strategies translate into sustained and measurable progress across all SDG targets.

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