

Address of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Leader of the Nation, His Excellency Emomali Rahmon to the Parliament of the Republic of Tajikistan

22.12.2016 12:06, Dushanbe city



***Distinguished Members of Senate and Lower Chamber of the Parliament!
Esteemed Compatriots!***

This year, my Address covering main aspects of our country's domestic and foreign policy is delivered after the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of Tajikistan's State Independence i.e. in the period when our beloved country has entered its new development phase and the noble people of Tajikistan have been making firm steps towards the flourished future. During these 25 years, thanks to the dedicated efforts of our peoples, we made significant achievements in political, economic, social and cultural development of our country. We have undertaken all of these efforts to strengthen the foundation of State Independence, because freedom and independence is our greatest achievement and holy national ideology. We will further undertake every possible effort to protect and ensure its sustainability and protect this grand beneficence (favor) of our nation as apple of our eyes despite the existing challenges.

Alongside with this, I would like to recall that the beginning of our independence period was a tough period of examination for our people. At the early 90th of the last century, Tajikistan was in the whirlpool of severe internal conflicts as a result of intervention of some foreign countries made under the slogan of society democratization and this process led to imposed civil war and fratricidal tragedy.

The noble people of Tajikistan very well remember the terrible aftermath and painful blow of the war started by a group of people and ill-wishers of the Tajik nation with a view to imposing a strange culture and religion on our people and establishing Islamic State, which caused the death of tens of thousands of our citizens and huge economic loss.

The imposed civil war lagged behind our country's development for several decades and made the people of Tajikistan work hard day and night for several years in order to overcome its devastating loss and bear very severe challenges and barriers.

The Government of Tajikistan spent almost ten years of independence period to make all efforts to restore the constitutional regime and governance pillars, particularly law enforcement agencies and military authorities, to return more than one million refugees to the country, to undertake post-war revival activities, ensure peace and stability and national unity.

We adopted and implemented the first Post-conflict Revival Program to re-construction destroyed educational and medical facilities, roads and residence buildings at the late 1997.

These activities made it possible to start political and constitutional reforms, adopt the first Constitution of our independent State and national symbols with a view to strengthening the foundation of our independence, revive the operation of paralyzed state authorities, establish a unified system of executive power, bicameral parliament and independent judicial body, ensure rule of law and order, and protection of citizens' rights and freedoms in the society.

As a result of the measures undertaken by the Government, we entered our development phase only at the beginning of 2000s and ensured stable economic growth and improved peoples' living standards by fostering constructive efforts and implementing comprehensive reforms in all areas.

Following this, we channeled all resources and possibilities and made efforts to achieve three national strategic objectives – energy security, country's connectivity and food security. Implementation of adopted programs made it possible to increase GDP up to four times by ensuring its 7% average annual growth.

Only within the last 15 years, the public budget revenue increased from TJS 300m to TJS 18bn, and the population's income and savings increased by 25 and 85 times accordingly. The average size of salary and pension increased by 60 and 85 times accordingly during the last 20 years. These achievements contributed to reduction of poverty rate to three times.

Though during the independence period the population's annual growth rate made 2.5 % and it increased by 1.6 times and reached from 5.5m to 8.7m, its living standards improved significantly and its average life expectancy increased up to 73.5 years.

During the independence period, we channeled TJS 88bn from all sources, including from the priority projects for development of energy, industry, construction, communication, infrastructure, education and healthcare and other social sectors.

In this period, we managed to construct and launch large and small power generation and transmission facilities amounting TJS 36bn to ensure energy security. Thus, we established our unified energy grid and commissioned new facilities with the capacity of 1300 MW.

It is worthwhile mentioning that according to the assessment of international financial institutions Tajikistan is among the top six countries of the world in terms of the green, i.e. environmentally clean energy share and currently the green power makes 98% of the electricity generated in our country. This is the input of Tajikistan in prevention of the devastating consequences of the climate change and implementation of environmental initiatives at the regional and global levels.

During the 25 years of independence, we constructed thousands of small and large industries on extraction and processing of metal, coal, light industry and chemistry, engineering, processing of precious and ferrous metals, construction materials and food industry by encouraging local and foreign investments.

We constructed and commissioned more than 2000km of roads, 190km of railroad and over 30km of road tunnels amounting TJS 11.4bn during the independence. As a result, we achieved one of our strategic objectives, i.e. the country's connectivity with a view to ensuring regular movement of freight and passenger vehicles, and transformed Tajikistan into a single unit country, which was split into three parts a while ago.

As for the agriculture, we ensured abundance of agricultural products by reforming and restructuring farms, implementing sector development programs, developing new lands, improving reclamation of lands and resuming their use for agricultural purposes, as well as expanding the area of horticulture and viticulture. Thus, the Horticulture Development Program made it possible to increase the country's orchard plots to 180 000 hectares, which is more by 100000ha or two times compared to 1991 and played a substantive role in protecting the country's food security, increasing export and providing the processing industry with raw materials.

We ensured the development of social areas, including science, education, healthcare, culture, employment and social protection of population in this period. We constructed and reconstructed more than 2500 educational facilities and over 1000 healthcare institutions, equipped them with the latest equipment and created favorable conditions for their operation. Only within the "State Program for Construction, Renovation and Reconstruction of Schools for 2008-2015", over 800 educational facilities were moved from private houses and carriages to school buildings, reconstructed and renovated, for which we channeled TJS 600m from all funding sources. We will continue this process within the public programs in the future and will promote the improvement and strengthening of their physical infrastructure.

Before the independence we had only 13 higher educational institutions with 70000 students in Tajikistan. Currently, the number of educational facilities and students increased to 39 and 170 000 accordingly. In addition to this, more than 30000 young people from Tajikistan study at higher education institutions in other advanced countries.

In this period, the maternal and child mortality rate decreased by 1.8 and 2.7 times accordingly and we also eliminated the risk of outburst of transmissible diseases.



We created more than one million jobs to employ and improve living standards of population. Alongside with this, we covered more than 100000 young people and adults with different occupational training and re-training courses to ensure their professional conformity with the labor market requirements.

Support of social areas has always been in the limelight of the Government and State policy. This was the reason the Government channeled TJS 45bn to this area from the budget during the independence period, which makes almost half of the public budget. I would like to reiterate that ensuring decent life for our citizens is the supreme goal of our Government and the State. We have been mobilizing all possible resources and opportunities to achieve these objectives.

The year of 2016 was indeed a historical and successful year for Tajik people, during which we made

significant achievements. Thus, we maintained sustainable economic growth and ensured macroeconomic and social indicators based on priority objectives despite the negative impact of external factors. GDP reached TJS 54bn and its real growth made 6.8%.

The prices in the consumer market remained stable and the inflation rate made 6% regardless of the national currency's devaluation. As the improvement of population's living standards and their social protection is the most important area in the Government policy, we allocated 52% of budget expenditures, i.e. TJS 8.1bn for this objective in 2016.

With a view to implementing the instructions made at the previous Address, we increased salaries of the budget-funded institutions' employees, as well as pensions and scholarships from 15% to 30% accordingly and channeled TJS 1.2bn for this purpose in one year.

It should be noted that we increased the salaries of the budget-funded institutions' employees and pension by 2 and 1.6 times accordingly within the last five years. We will continue these initiatives in the future. We envisage the public budget for 2017 amounting more than TJS 19bn, which is more by almost 10% compared to 2016 and more than half of it will be channeled to the social sector.

Regardless of our achievements in 2016, we also had some shortcomings and challenges emerged in the real economic situation. For example, due to the fact that some ministries

and agencies did not undertake necessary measures, and as a result of negative impact of external factors on the economy, fee-based public services, foreign trade turnover, import and lending have declined and the public budget's revenue was not implemented fully. However, we ensured full and timely funding of the social sector from the public budget.

Banking system stability is one of the important factors for sustainable economic development at the current situation. I would like to emphasize that our banking system and bank supervision by the National Bank of Tajikistan does not meet the current requirement. The operation of banks and other financial institutions show that due to the negative impact of internal and external factors, the amount of loans issued declined by 32% and the banking system services desires to be improved. Therefore the Government, the National Bank and the Ministry of Finance have to strictly supervise the banks, financial institutions and budget supported enterprises and undertake immediate measures to protect the legal rights and interests of depositors, particularly in maintaining public trust and implementing banking obligations.

Distinguished members of Upper and Lower Chambers!

As no country can ensure its development without the development of energy, we identified the energy security and energy efficiency as one of the State's strategic objectives. We have currently been implementing 11 public investment projects amounting TJS 10bn in total to achieve this objective as well as develop and effectively use the huge energy resources of the country. Alongside with construction of new and rehabilitation of existing hydropower plants, we also constructed the first and the second phases of Dushanbe-2 thermal power plant with the capacity of 400MW to supply various facilities and residents of Dushanbe with heating and address the power deficit in winter.

In addition to this, we started the Project on renovation of Sarband HPP amounting TJS 1.1bn and we will start the first phase of Norak HPP rehabilitation project amounting TJS 3bn and Qayroqum HPP in 2017.

We recently had a landmark event on start of the construction of the dam of Roghun HPP. Since the beginning of rehabilitation and construction activities we invested TJS 12bn, including TJS 2.8bn in 2016 in this project. The construction activities in this pivotal facility are ongoing and its first unit will be launched by the end of 2018 according to the schedule.

The Government's main task in the nearest years to ensure reliable and continuous supply of all consumers with power, which will be implemented through increase of generation volume, application of alternative sources of power generation, improvement of management efficiency in the sector and implementation of priority investment projects. In this regard, the Ministry of Energy and Water resources of Tajikistan, OJSHC «Barqi Tojik» and other relevant entities, alongside with expanding major activities in this area, need to ensure accurate and strict supervision of power metering to reduce energy loss.

In this process, we should not forget that alongside with the increase of power generation, the number of population and industrial enterprises is also increasing and the demand for power is growing more and more. Therefore, while designing and constructing new buildings and manufacturing enterprises, launching new facilities, importing household

equipment and technologies, we should focus on energy-efficient products and raise awareness of population on the use of energy efficient technologies.

It is my full belief that we will fully achieve one of our main strategic objectives i.e. energy security in the nearest future. So far, we implemented a number of effective activities to commission new industrial capacities, introduce production of competitive and import-replacing products, strengthen our export potential and implement our strategic programs in general. Particularly, the development of real sectors, ensuring favorable investment climate, encouraging foreign direct investments and import of the latest innovative technologies make it possible to ensure the country's industrialization and continuously increase industrial product volume and create new jobs.

Construction of three industrial enterprises in Yovon district and launch of minerals processing plant in Takob, which will produce raw materials for aluminum production, will make it possible to reduce the aluminum production cost and dependence on imported raw materials, and cotton processing textile complex in Danghara will ensure favorable environment to increase the country's export potential. Construction of modern minerals processing plant in Panjakent, metallurgy and iron products enterprises in Hisor town and Spitamen district, as well as gold extraction and processing plant in Vahdat district is a logical continuation of this constructive process.

It should be noted that we encouraged TJS 7.5bn of direct investment in total for construction and launch of the above-mentioned industries and enterprises and two new cement plants. The new cement plants will make it possible to increase the annual production of cement to 4.5m tons or 82 times more compared to 2000 and alongside with full supply of the domestic markets with this construction materials will increase its export.

We started the renovation and rehabilitation of the first phase of nitrogen fertilizer plant in Sarband in November of this year by attracting TJS 2.9bn of foreign direct investment, the first phase of which will be commissioned in February 2018. The plant will be operating in its full capacity within the next three years and produce 300 000 tons of ammonia and 500 000 tons of carbamide, in total 800000 tons of products. Thus, the agricultural sector's demand in nitrogen fertilizers will be met fully and export of this product to other countries will be ensured.

Also, given the growing demand of our country in coal, we will increase its production to 1.3m tons by the end of 2016, which is 62 times more compared to 2000. In parallel with launch of new production industries, we will increase extraction of coal to 2m tons by 2018.

We have adopted a special program on import replacing production and export-oriented products, which is under implementation now. The Government has to ensure the future development of industry through improvement of raw material processing effectiveness and increase of local production, renovation of main assets, import of innovative technologies and improvement of product competitiveness.

Given the great importance of road construction and transport, 19 public investment projects with total amount of TJS 6.5bn are under implementation at present. We launched the railroad of Dushanbe-Qurgonteppa-Kulob (Vahdat-Yovon section),

highways of Dushanbe-Tursunzoda, Ayni-Panjakent and Vose-Khovaling with the total funding of almost TJS 3 bn over the recent years. The construction of the highways of Kulob-Darvoz (Shurobod-Shohon section) and Sayron-Karamik is also ongoing.

We started construction and renovation of several transport facilities, including highway of Khujand-Isfara, a section of Dushanbe-Tursunzoda highway and a Project on improvement of Dushanbe International airport infrastructure this year. We plan to rehabilitate and reconstruct Dushanbe-Kurgonteppa highway and selected sections of Kulob-Darvoz, Kulob-Shamsiddin Shohin and Shkev-Darvoz district centre highways in 2017.

We envisage renovating and reconstructing more than 2000 km of roads with a view to ensuring full compliance of highways and other transport infrastructure with the latest standards and inverting Tajikistan into a transit country in the midterm period by attracting local and foreign investments.

As I emphasized in my last address, heads of relevant ministries and agencies, governors of provinces, towns and districts had to accelerate rehabilitation and reconstruction activities on the roads within the towns, between districts, between remote villages and other settlements and attach a significant importance to the requirements of architecture arts during the construction of new buildings and facilities.

Therefore, the Government, particularly the Ministry of Transport, with a view to implementing identified tasks and full and effective use of existing capacities, has to undertake necessary steps to launch new flights, to reconstruct and rehabilitate international airports, railways and also develop and propose priority projects on attraction of local and foreign investment.

Distinguished Members of the Parliament!

As a result of productive efforts of farmers in 2016 sustainable development of the sector continued and production of cereals reached 1,4m tons, potato 890 000 tons and vegetable 1,67m tons, which positively promoted the public food supply. Nevertheless, I would like to note that we still have much more opportunity to substantively increase production in this sector given our country's reserves and capacity.

Therefore, the Ministry of Agriculture, Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Executive Authorities of provinces, towns and districts need to pay a special attention to sustainable increase of all types of agricultural products within the implementation of adopted programs.

Cotton industry facilitates the development of textile industry, export of products and employment of people. However, due to the various factors, particularly the market situation, we reduced its cultivation area compared to previous years, which led to decline in operation of cotton ginneries and volume of its export.

Hence, depending on climate conditions and production capacity of every region of the country, authorities in charge need to undertake additional measures to gradually increase cotton areas, improve productivity and thereby increase its production volume

and also to further encourage farmers to increase cotton production and supply textile enterprises with raw material.

It should be noted that given the population growth and with a view to developing various sectors in rural areas during the independence period more than 190 000 ha of arable lands withdrawn from agricultural use, 134 000 ha of which was allocated for the construction of residential buildings and 10 000 ha was allocated for establishment of industries and social institutions.

Therefore, the Government, including the Ministry of Agriculture, State Committee for Land Management and Geodesy and the Agency for Land Reclamation and Irrigation have to ensure the implementation of the “State Program for Development of New Irrigated Lands and Rehabilitation of Fellow Lands (2012-2020)” to prevent this process and annually increase of the newly developed agricultural lands.

The state of seeds production in the country does not meet the increasing demand of production sector and the supply of agrarians with high quality seeds needs to be improved. In this regard, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Academy of Agricultural Sciences are expected to expand research on this issue and ensure practical application of research outcomes and report every six month to the Government on the accomplished activities.

The livestock sector operation also desires to be improved regardless of certain achievements in this area. In this regard, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Academy of Agricultural Sciences and the Executive Authorities of provinces, cities and districts should pay a serious attention to breeds improvement to ensure development of livestock and supply the population with meat and dairy products.

Dear Participants!

The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan pays a significant attention to the field of tourism and has been ensuring necessary framework for its development.

We have been ensuring the sector’s development through the introduction of e-visa system for foreign tourists, creation of tourism zones and construction of necessary infrastructure within the state programs adopted in this area. Simplified visa regime is currently effective in Tajikistan for the citizens of more than 80 countries. As a result of these activities the number of tourists has gradually increased over the past three years and increased by two times (from 207 to 414 000).

Fabulously beautiful landscape and nature of Tajikistan is unique and one of the best tourist destinations in the world from the perspective of civilization and hospitality, climate, weather, landscape, sky-high mountains, delicious fruits, wonderful glaciers, healing waters, lakes and springs with pure water, flora and fauna, national customs and traditions.

In this regard, it is necessary to establish a separate institution on tourism under the Government of Tajikistan in 2017 in order to further expand the tourism sector, to effectively use existing opportunities in this area, to develop tourism infrastructure, to improve quality of services, extend the process of public regulation and support of

domestic and international tourism, to attract more investments in this sphere and to train professional staff.

Also, the Government jointly with the relevant ministries and agencies and local executive authorities need to ensure the development of tourism infrastructure, improvement of quality of services, expansion of the process of public regulation and support of tourism, attraction of more investments, coordination of the activities of all agencies and institutions and training of professional staff in this field with a view to further developing the sector and widely using the existing opportunities.

With a view to ensuring speedy development of tourism it is necessary to exempt the import of construction equipment and materials for tourism facilities from tax and customs duties, as well as to exempt tourism agencies from the profit tax during the first five years of their operation. Therefore, the Government should undertake measures to ensure application of these benefits.

I would like to remind that substantive improvement of the level and quality of services pertains to all ministries and agencies, including local executive authorities and the private sector, because the level and quality of services in the contemporary time-being is one of the main indicators of the state development of and social culture.

Distinguished Members of the Parliament!

Honorable Participants!

Development of private sector, in particular, entrepreneurship, is one of the main components of our economic policy and we implemented significant activities on strengthening of public-private partnership, public support to entrepreneurship, simplification of business registration procedures and regulation of licensing.

We ensured business enabling environment and investment climate and expanded public-private partnership through reforms and according to the rating by international financial institutions Tajikistan was included into the list of top ten reformers for three times over the recent years.

The Government will expand the reforms on improvement of investment climate and business environment to ensure further development of the country and attraction of more direct investments.

We have encouraged TJS 7.5bn into our national economy in 2016, 51% of which is foreign direct investment.

We have currently been implementing more than 70 projects with the total amount of TJS 22bn funded by the public funds and development partners in various sectors of economy and seven projects on construction and reconstruction of 12 industrial facilities with the total amount of TJS 11bn funded by local and foreign direct investments.

It is worthwhile noting that entrepreneurs and investors have been proactive in implementation of the Government priorities, particularly sustainable economic

development, import of the latest technologies, creation of new jobs, population income increase as well as constructive and charity activities.

As a result of implemented reforms and initiatives the number of business entities reached 290 000 in 2016, which is 110 000 more compared to the previous five years. However, I have to outline that we still observe some artificial administrative barriers in terms of creation of favorable climate for direct investments and entrepreneurship support. Given the impact of external factors the current situation with entrepreneurship and investment requires to provide more privileges to businesses. Therefore, with a view to accelerating the industrialization process, development of production and export, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Ministry of Finance, State Committee for Investment and Public Property Management need to propose mechanisms of state support and privileges for producers and exporters of local products in terms of tax and customs fees and to investors for import of new equipment and technologies based on thorough analysis and study.

In view of intensive economic integration of our country into the international trade, harmonization of taxation with the main trade and economic partners, as well as neighboring countries is of particular importance to become competitive in attraction of investments and the global financial markets. In this regard, the Government needs to thoroughly study this issue by taking into account our economic and financial interests and make concrete proposals in the first quarter of 2017.

Also, with a view to supporting entrepreneurship and sustainable development of tourism all models of new vehicles imported to the country will be released from tax and customs fees by 50% effective from January 2017.

Last year we adopted the new Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on inspection of businesses with a view to regulating the operation of relevant authorities. However, entrepreneurs are concerned with the large number of inspection and supervision authorities and unexpected/unscheduled inspections. Therefore, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the Ministry of Finance, State Committee for Investment and Public Property Management need to comprehensively analyze this issue and propose to the Government relevant draft legal and regulatory document on reduction of inspections and ensuring their better transparency and simplification.

Distinguished Members of the Parliament!

Dear Compatriots!

The measures we implemented to present and the achievements we made do not satisfy the current needs, because we still have a lot of challenges and issues to be addressed in our activities. Thus, it is our duty to make all possible efforts and mobilize all resources and capacity to overcome existing shortcomings and maintain sustainable development of our national economy's sectors.

We adopted the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan (to 2030) in 2016 with a view to ensuring further development of our country, implementing national priorities and thereby improving population's living standards in midterm and long-term periods.

Social sectors development will remain our supreme objective according to our long-term priorities.

We need to develop and expand a new system of sustainable economic development based on attraction of local and foreign investment, dynamic development of industry, agriculture and improvement of financial sector to achieve this objective.

In the context of rapidly changing global political and economic situation national economy resilience to external factors has to be fostered.

I would like to emphasize that we identified the issues of human capacity building, real sector effectiveness improvement, public administration institutional strengthening, ensuring sustainable macroeconomic indicators and socio-economic development through creation of new productive jobs as well as ensuring environment for the expansion of the country's export potential as the most important priorities of our socio-economic policy till the 30th anniversary of our state independence, i.e. by 2021.

Industrial goods production volume should be increased by more than 35% and the growth of the export oriented local products should be doubled during the next five years.

In this period we have to attach a priority attention to the development of production entrepreneurship and attraction of direct investments as a driving force of the economy and increase the share of private capital in GDP by two times.

Aforementioned measures should provide an opportunity for exploring new export markets, reducing import of consumer goods, decreasing vulnerability of the country from external factors, and promote the development of real economy and increase in the public budget revenue.

With a view to expanding public employment and reducing the number of unemployed, especially among youth, we should annually create not less than 100 000 jobs by ensuring development of agriculture, product proceeding, light industry, food industry, construction materials, chemical substances and minerals sectors, as well as transport, communication, tourism, education and healthcare services.

We intend to increase GDP per capita by three times and, decrease the poverty rate by two times and increase the share of population with middle income from 22 to 50% by mobilizing all our existing potential and capacity by 2030.

We envisage improving the investment climate in Tajikistan and increasing the share of private capital in GDP by five times by 2030.

During the next 15 years the share of industry in GDP should be increased significantly and Tajikistan should be inverted into an industrial country.

In addition to this, the Government needs to ensure innovative measures and serious reforms aimed at increasing effectiveness of all spheres of the national economy, first and foremost in energy, industry and agriculture sectors.

Dear Friends!

During the next five years the Government will focus on the quality of human capacity building and pay a serious attention to development of science, education, healthcare, culture, environment and employment, as a result of which Tajikistan would ensure high level of human development.

During this period, all adults will have at least secondary education and not less than half of able-bodied population will have vocational or higher education.

Therefore, during the implementation of strategic documents it is necessary to attach a special attention to the development of science, education, healthcare, culture, social security, environment, and supply of population with safe water and other housing and utility services to improve human capital indicators dimension.

In this regard, the Government, heads of ministry and agency, executive authorities in provinces, cities and districts in cooperation with local and foreign entrepreneurs and investors, Development Partners and civil society need to undertake necessary measures to implement adopted state strategies and programs.

One of the most important areas of the Government and local executive authorities is creation of new jobs for the people of our country. We will pay a priority attention to this issue given the annual growth of population and labor force.

For this purpose, we will fully support the private sector, small and medium enterprises, particularly production companies and undertake additional measures to attract investment to this sector and by paying more attention to the productive employment of adults, women and youth, will develop folk-crafts, handicrafts and home-based employment and will make effective use of seasonal jobs. Alongside with this, we will undertake measures to upgrade the level of occupational training of adults and youth and to ensure their professional compliance with the labor market demands.

However, analyses show that the ministries of labor, migration and employment, education and science, executive authorities still do not pay sufficient attention to increase the number of training courses for adults, more involvement of unemployed population, especially women and youth.

In this regard, heads of ministry of education and science, labor, migration and employment, industry and innovative technologies, Statistics Agency, chairmen of provinces, towns and districts should undertake effective measures to address the shortcomings and challenges in this area, pay more attention to creation of new jobs, development of folk crafts, occupational training and the operation of adult training centers and submit their reports to the Government twice a year.

At the same time, precise job statistics should be ensured and accurate information on number of permanent, seasonal and temporary jobs should be submitted to relevant authorities.

According to the analyses 11 000 vacant jobs are available only at the Ministry of healthcare and social protection and the Ministry of education and science.

Improvement of education quality at all levels is the priority task of science and education sector staff in the current situation. Despite of clear results achieved, it does not still satisfy our requirements.

In order to improve the quality of education at all levels, in particular at the vocational education level, we have to attach a serious attention not to quantity, but to quality and train specialists meeting the requirements of the contemporary time-being.

In this regard, we would like to request professors, teachers and parents to draw the attention of teenagers, pupils and students to acquire the latest knowledge, to pay more attention to study of hard sciences, learning of foreign languages and Information and Communication Technologies, pay a serious attention to vocational training of students and children and educate them in the spirit of love to knowledge and diligence.

Alongside with this, competent authorities need to undertake necessary measures to establish centers and clubs of technical fellows within the secondary, primary vocational and higher education facilities and to develop support centers for talented students.

Necessary steps should be taken to provide educational facilities with qualified teachers and to address the issue of the lack of teachers, especially in hard sciences and foreign languages, as well as to provide rural schools, which make 70% currently, with specialists with professional higher education, and the problem of lack of teachers in the country should be addressed fully by 2019.

Tajikistan will continue making further step towards industrialization of the country according to the adopted Public Programs, which will increase the demand for qualified technical and technology specialists in the nearest future. Therefore, ministries of education and science, labor, migration and employment, committees of youth, sport and tourism, television and radio, women and family affairs, Academy of Science, sector academies, local executive authorities have to undertake additional measures to eliminate existing shortcomings and arrange scientific and creativity competitions with a view to discovering young talents and upgrading the technical comprehension of teenagers.

The science plays a key role in the contemporary time-being and promotes the development of state. Unfortunately, innovation and invention is underdeveloped in our country so far and hard sciences and technological discoveries are not visible enough.

We allocated TJS 81m from the public budget for contracted research in 2016 only.

In the age with the cosmic speed of science and technology development, the Tajik science lacks innovation and scientific initiatives, talented inventors and innovators are not involved in the hard sciences and contract research activities do not focus on the state demands.

Development of fundamental sciences is very important and priority currently in the country and promotion of science and research is the paramount task of scientists in this area, which requires serious improvement.

With a view to getting better results of research and scientific works in this area and their practical application in the development of local production, I would like to propose to

establish a Centre for Innovative Technologies Research within the Academy of Science and to involve talented students and professors engaged in technical and technological sciences, young inventors in it.

At the same time, there is a need to revise the funding of science in order to perform contracted research and ensure their effective use and the Government needs to undertake measures to regulate this issue based on its thorough study.

I believe that our scientists will further conduct research within the state strategies and programs and pay a serious attention to training of young innovators and inventors.

Distinguished Participants!

The issue of strengthening of public moral principal, formulation of constructive and creative thinking and respect of national and global cultural values is of particular importance in our policy and all cultural entities, mass media, TV and radio and social networks are obliged to enhance their activities to address aforementioned issues, particularly in protection of independence, as well as development of national thinking, improvement of the world outlook and education of society, protection of rich heritage of Tajik nation and its decent representation to the world.

Effective implementation of state youth policy has been the core of Governments activity since the very beginning of our independence.

Youth are the majority in Tajikistan's population, who are successors of the deeds of elder generation, creative power and real capacity for the development of society, and the future of the Nation and the State overall.

Population average age in Tajikistan is 24 years.

Nowadays, youth work in all spheres of the national economy, also serve in armed forces and significantly contribute to the development of national economy in a dedicated way. They also study various specialties both inside and outside Tajikistan and acquire occupations and specialties needed in our country.

The Government of Tajikistan always supports creative initiatives and proposals of the youth and creates favorable condition for their implementation. In response to this care, our youth need to make all possible efforts to gain knowledge, choose contemporary occupations, and contribute in development and prosperity of their homeland, their motherland defense, development of science and technology and creativity.

Youth have to be more active than any other segment of society, propose constructive initiatives, protect states symbols, national relics and independence achievements, participate in the political and social life of our beloved Tajikistan with full dedication and constructive energy, protect state security, honor and dignity of motherland, protect themselves from all kind of negative threats and challenges of the contemporary world and be the pride of our sacred motherland.

Taking into account the contribution of the youth in development of society and their active participation in the political and economic life of the country, I propose to announce 2017 the Year of the Youth in the Republic of Tajikistan.

Our youth should have a high sense of national consciousness wherever they are, should be proud of their homeland, nation, their own independent state, national language and culture, and should always stand ready and be quick-minded to protect them.

The current generation, i.e. the generation of independence period, completely differs from the previous generations by their knowledge and worldview, level of thinking, ethics and morality.

We have supported the initiatives of women have constantly and have undertaken serious measures for their practical implementation during the independence period.

Nowadays, women constitute a major part of staff in education, healthcare and other social sectors and 23% of civil servants. We need to attract more girls and women into the institutions of banking system, communication service, employment and other service sectors in the future.

It would be reasonable to allocate quotas and privileges for the support of women and girls at different levels and this initiative would be one of the ways of ensuring equal rights of women and men.

Dear friends!

The Government of Tajikistan attaches particular importance to improvement of access, quality and effectiveness of medical services to population as well as to the enhancement of new types of primary healthcare services within the healthcare reforms, because a healthy nation is the basis of a healthy society.

We have increased the healthcare funding by 19 times only during the last 15 years and implemented over 20 national sectoral programs with a view to improving living standards and ensuring effective operation of medical workers.

In addition, with a view to providing healthcare institutions of the country with highly qualified staff at the earliest possible we have established the second State Medical University in Khatlon province, which admitted its first batch of students.

At the same time, the need in improving the quality and capacity of human resources in the sphere, establishing an effective medical education system taking into account the incentives mechanism, improving the state of medical centers and points in a number of districts and remote villages, introducing the latest medical technologies, as well as enhancing the ethics of communication of the staff are among the urgent issues to be addressed.

The strict control of medicine quality is one of the critical issues in the healthcare sector since medicines are still mainly imported from abroad, and their quality is not properly tested. Therefore, the Ministry of Healthcare and Social Protection needs to undertake measures to provide the pharmaceutical laboratories with the latest equipment and

jointly with the Ministry of Industry and Innovative Technologies, the State Committee for Investments and Public Property Management should make proposals on construction of drug manufacturing plants and the development of pharmaceutical industry through direct investments.

Nowadays, the problem of counterfeit and low quality medicines is of a great concern not only in Tajikistan, but also in many other countries of the world. The recovery of patients can be guaranteed only based on the quality of medicines.

In this regard, the relevant ministries and departments should undertake necessary actions towards reducing the circulation of counterfeit and low-quality medicines in the country.

Alongside with this, continuously growing price of medicines has also been another issue in the healthcare.

Since more than 90% of medicines are imported to Tajikistan from abroad, the regulation of medicine price remains a very important and topical issue despite its complexity. VAT exemption of medicine production in Tajikistan is also an important issue that can facilitate access to it and decrease the price. In this regard, the relevant ministries and agencies need to study this issue and submit appropriate proposals to the Government.

The targeted support of needy segment of the population through the targeted assistance and public services is one of the important areas of the State policy.

We have been piloting a mechanism for designation and payment of targeted social aid in the country now and applied it in 40 districts in 2016. Based on this, the Ministry of Healthcare and Social Protection jointly with the Agency for Social Insurance and Pensions should undertake effective measures to ensure development of targeted social aid and social support of vulnerable strata of population.

The officials in charge also need to undertake concrete step to improve material and social conditions of poor families, orphans and persons with disabilities and lonely people.

Dear Compatriots!

Tajikistan is a law-based, democratic and secular state, where human and civil rights and freedoms, rule of law and legal order is guaranteed. We improved the legal framework of the country and adopted many legal and regulatory documents during the independence period with a view to implementing this Constitutional value.

The Parliament adopted a number of laws aimed at the protection of human and civil rights and freedoms, ensuring law and order and development of economy and business.

The Ministry of Justice, Prosecutor General's Office and the National Center for Legislation have to develop and submit to Government Legal Policy Concept of the Republic of Tajikistan to ensure further development of national legislation.

We have undertaken certain activities to strengthen judiciary independence based on the amendments made in the Constitution of Tajikistan. In this process, we abolished the

Council of Justice and handed over the issues pertaining to the selection and rotation of personnel as well as advanced professional training of judges to the Supreme Court and Supreme Economic Court. Therefore, the Heads of the above-mentioned institutions have to pay particular attention to promotion of candidates to position of judge, to examine their personality according to procedures in place and to nominate the lawyers, who possess good theoretical knowledge, adequate professional experience and are suitable for this responsible public position from the ethics and behavior perspective.

I should note that the execution of judicial decisions plays an important role in ensuring justice. However, as the experience shows some substantive delays in judicial decision implementation. Thus, the Ministry of Justice, the Supreme Court, the Supreme Economic Court and the Prosecutor General's Office need to develop and submit to the Government a mechanism for effective implementation of judicial decisions and measures ensuring effective operation of court agents.

In addition, the ministries of justice, education and science, Ombudsman Office, the Academy of Sciences, executive authorities in provinces, towns and districts, higher education institutions and all government entities need to expand their awareness-raising activities.

The Ministry of Education and Science has also to introduce compulsory courses on Constitution and the laws of the Republic of Tajikistan "On regulation of traditions and ceremonies" and "On parents' responsibility in children education".

Terrorism and extremism became a global threat and the contemporary world is concerned with this issue over the past years. Increasing extremist and terrorist crimes have been promoting the expansion of international terrorism, intensification of extremist elements, involvement of youth into terrorist organizations and their participation in the armed conflicts in other countries.

Another challenge is corrupt practices, which has been impeding sustainable socio-economic development of the country and citizens are really concerned with this phenomenon. There are still cases of corruption-related crimes committed by some staff of governmental agencies and other institutions.

The Agency for State Financial Control and Fight against Corruption conducted a social survey on corruption assessment this year. According to this survey, corruption is observed at the level of local authorities and lack of knowledge of citizens on legislation and their desire to the quick problem resolution is evaluated as the main reason for committing corruption-related crimes.

The level of corruption is high within the law enforcement agencies and courts, in the areas of land management, healthcare, religious affairs, regulation of traditions, celebrations and ceremonies, registrar offices and military recruitment offices.

Besides, the analyses show that despite the many existing corruption factors the legislation does not authorize the Agency for State Financial Control and Fight against Corruption to conduct independent inspection of corruption cases in terms of taxes, operation of state-owned banks and other financial institutions in terms of budget fund, public funds and debt transactions. Therefore, the Ministry of Justice and the Agency for

State Financial Control and Fight against Corruption have to prepare and submit to Government draft legal and regulatory documents to overcome these shortcomings.

We should not forget that counteraction to corruption is not only the task of the law enforcement agencies. The whole community, every citizen and civil society also should care about this issue. Only in this case we can reduce the level of corruption in the country.

The illegal drug trafficking is another factor of concern that is one of the principal sources of financing of international terrorism. In this regard, the Prosecutor General's Office, the Drug Control Agency, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Committee for National Security, and the Customs Administration have to expand cooperation, and also ensure integration of the operations of Tajik authorities with their counterparts in other countries.

I would like to once again emphasize that the rule of law and order, safeguarding peace and stability of society, protection of human and civil rights and freedoms, interests of the State and society are the main tasks of the law enforcement agencies of the country. Given this factor and unstable situation in the world and the region, the law enforcement agencies and military authorities need to strengthen their activity in the area of counteraction to crimes, particularly organized and transnational crimes, ensuring security, law and order, defense capacity building, and every officer of these institutions should fulfill their duties with a high sense of responsibility and dedication.

Dear Parliament Members!

The formulation and implementation of open-doors foreign policy is one of the great achievements of our national State in the period of our independence.

Thanks to our balanced foreign policy, Tajikistan ensured its deserved reputation in the international stage in this period and established multifaceted relations and cooperation with the countries of the world, international and regional organizations and international financial institutions.

The genuine goals of the foreign policy of Tajikistan remain unchanged and are aimed at the protection of national interests in the international stage, ensuring favorable conditions overseas for the sustainable development of the country and promoting the strengthening of the pillars of State independence and sovereignty of Tajikistan. Therefore, promoting environment of trust and security of our country with all neighboring countries through expansion and strengthening of good neighborliness, the use of political and diplomatic tools, consistent efforts towards addressing urgent regional issues will remain as the core of our foreign policy.

Tajikistan established friendly relations and multidimensional beneficial cooperation with all countries and has been expanding constructive friendly ties with them based on mutual respect and equality.

Accordingly, we will further undertake practical measures towards the expansion of our cooperation with development partners, international and regional organizations and international financial institutions.

It should be noted that during the independence period international partners supported many constructive initiatives of our country regarding the important issues of global politics and big regional projects. Our country will further continue its creative initiatives to address other urgent international and regional issues.

Tajikistan is acknowledged as the initiator and active champion on effective use of water resources in the international stage. Currently, we have been making efforts to implement the proposal of Tajikistan on a new International Decade “Water for Sustainable Development” in cooperation with the international community.

In this regard, support in proper implementation of the Decade is one of the important tasks for the near future. I would like to inform that yesterday the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution titled “International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028”. In this regard, the President of the UN General Assembly Mr. Peter Thomson sent a congratulatory message to the Head of State and people of Tajikistan. And I, in my turn, sincerely congratulate the noble people of Tajikistan and the international community on the occasion of adoption of this important initiative.

Distinguished Members of Parliament!

Esteemed Compatriots!

I would like to emphasize that the issues we raised today and the instructions we delivered, are primarily aimed at safeguarding peace and stability, national unity, protection of state independence and achievements of the Tajik people, and strengthening economic capacity of the country, ensuring better living standards and improving the image of our beloved motherland – Tajikistan at the international stage are among our most important tasks. In order to achieve these supreme goals, we need to honestly work for the prosperity and progress of our beloved motherland, implement constructive initiatives, conduct social and economic reforms, promote business and investment climate, create more new jobs, and ensure effective public administration.

I trust in leadership skills of the heads of ministry and agency, members of Parliament, public servants, including chairmen of provinces, towns and districts, and it is my firm belief that they will put the interests of state and nation above all and mobilize their knowledge, experience and efforts to make sure our people live in peace and stability.

The state independence and freedom are the most sacred and greatest values for us, and all our achievements depend on them. Therefore, protection of freedom, independence and national and state interests is the most important task of every conscious, patriotic and dedicated individual of this country.

I am confident that we will overcome challenges faced by our society and state in the nearest future through collective efforts, and our beloved Tajikistan will turn into a really prosperous and developed country.

I wish all of you, esteemed participants, and the entire noble people of Tajikistan well-being, prosperity, continued health and success in the upcoming New Year, which we will celebrate in the next few days.

Thank you!

