



PRESS-RELEASE
On the occasion of 16th anniversary of Independence
of the Republic of Tajikistan

On 9th of September 2007 Tajikistan celebrates 16 anniversary of Independence. From this date the new list of Tajik nation's history starts.

Independence which was gained in solely peaceful manner unfortunately faced tragic events. However the wisdom of the Tajik nation led by Emomali Rahmon managed to overcome all these difficulties and confidently bring the country on the road of peace. The main result – stability in the society, confidence of tomorrow is achieved. The unprecedented case in a world practice is carried out. All refugees who left their homes during armed conflict – more than one million of them, were returned to their homeland. Gradually the situation in the economy was normalized, though the economical damage of the conflict was more than 7 billion USD.

The most important factors of the normalization of the situation in the country are **reforms in the political structures** of the society and state, the ones of the democratization of the societal life are the aspirations of political parties and movements to participate in the governance. The political system of Tajikistan is unique among other post-soviet muslim republics because political party established on religious values freely participates in it. The consistency of the form with content was realized in practice. Political ambitions of the certain part of the society, which recently aspired to take the power violently, were realized legally. Today six political parties can equally compete for power based on their support in the society.

It should be noted that post-conflict Tajikistan set a short term task – creation of conditions for sustainable economic development based on market relations. The target is to satisfy the demands of the society, provide political and social stability in the state, to create real pre-requisites for the development of democracy, protection of human rights. In this purpose the liberalizing reform of state political structure was carried out. This reform covered legislative and judicial systems as well. General public, western experts and NGOs representatives took active part in it.

But any reform would lose its continuity qualities if not accompanied by **real economic progress**. It is obvious that Tajikistan has limited possibilities for rapid development of the economic strategy due to its geographic situation and inadequate natural and land resources (poor carbonates deposits, 93% of the territory are covered by

mountains). Tajikistan is in very difficult transport infrastructure situation. 80% of the population of the country, which has second largest volume of hydro-energy resources after Russia among former USSR republics, has no electricity, light and heating for six month a year (autumn and winter season). Schools, hospitals do not function, not to mention other objects of life support. In such a circumstances the socio-political stability of the state can be put into question.

In this situation the political management identified priorities for economic development of the country.

In aspiration to provide minimal conditions for overcoming of **transport infrastructure isolation**, the Kulyab-Murghab-Karakorum highway (China) was built. As well as "Istiqlol" tunnel through Gissar mountain range, which allowed to make a cut of 1,500 km on the way from the capital to the northern parts of Tajikistan.

There were five large bridges built on the Panj river linking not only Tajikistan with Afghanistan but other countries of the region as well. The last bridge was put in operation with the financial support of USA. New bridge will improve economic and trade cooperation between the countries and the region. It is nearly 700 m. long and 11m across. The carrying capacity of the bridge is about 1.500 trucks per day. International transportation organizations have already included Tajikistan into their lists of countries able to provide transit transportation towards countries of South Asia.

The construction of two more pass-ways had begun and reconstruction of highways to China, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan has significantly moved ahead.

With the purpose of regulation of processes in hydropower sector of national economy, the development and realization of the Concept of **energy development** of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period 2015 is stipulated.

Tajikistan which generates more than 65% of water resources of the Central Asian region uses about 5% of it. But in order to meet its own demand country needs at least 2,5-3 billion kW/h per year.

Thanks to active participation of Russia and Iran, Sangtuda-1 and Sangtuda-2 are being built. In view of very harsh situation with electricity supply, the decision was taken to put the first Unit of Sangtuda-1 in operation by December this year.

Unfortunately, the annual production of Sangtuda-1 and Sangtuda-2 will not be able to solve the problem of securing of power supply even after putting them in operation in full. The problem still keeps the urgency. But during planning and building of hydro-energy installations Tajikistan proceeds not from its own interests only, but from the interests of neighbouring countries as well. Tajikistan strictly considers the sound calculations of specialized research institutes which designed these installations. Besides, it was strictly beard in mind that Tajikistan due to its geographical and relief features is the water-user and cannot become the water-consumer.

During the years of Independence the **provision of the national security** was one of the most important tasks for the Republic of Tajikistan. The mentioned issue was directly connected with the situation in Afghanistan with which Tajikistan has the longest border-line in the post soviet space. Struggle against terrorist groups, weapon, ammunition smuggling and drug-trafficking, extremist literature and destructive ideology – this is not a full list of subversive activity, which generates instability in this long-suffering country. According to official data of the law enforcement bodies of the Republic of Tajikistan only in the past year there were 4789,8 kg of illegal drugs seized.

It is highly desirable that the role of the Republic of Tajikistan is evaluated by the world community as a buffer zone from modern threats not only for Central Asian states, but also for the European countries. The given area deserves especial attention even by organization of the joint and coordinated interoperability both on border with Afghanistan and for undertaking of appropriate activities on rendering support to Afghanistan in struggle against the specified negative phenomena.

Tajikistan as the sovereign state realizes, that provision for democracy, prosperity of the nation, protection of its interests, as well as the ones of friends and partners at appropriate levels is obviously possible with a condition of building of socially protected society.

With the aim of creating sustainable future development of the country, the Government of Tajikistan has worked out the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan until 2015 and the Poverty Reduction Strategy for 2007 - 2009.

The main target of the implementation of these strategies is to provide a stable development of the economy and an increase in the living standards of the people of Tajikistan that fully meet the Millennium Development Goals.

However, a new period of economic development requires more investments and improvement in the investment mechanism. Therefore, the State Committee on Investment and State Property Management, Ministries of Economic Development and Trade, Finance and other related agencies were obliged to provide concrete proposals regarding the effectiveness of investment projects and there conditions of financing. For the improvement of investment climate and the adjustment of state legislation to the current situation, the President declared the necessity of establishing Consultation Councils.

Tajikistan is extremely interested in the further development and a deepening of mutually advantageous relations with the **European Union** both on bilateral and on multilateral levels. The main aspects of these mutual relations are seen in economic cooperation, humanitarian sphere, struggle against new threats, especially with terrorism and drug-trafficking.

A Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the EU and Tajikistan was signed in Luxemburg on 11 October 2004, replacing the TCA. The PCA will heighten the both sides' profile and interests. It will reinforce the Tajikistan's economic stability and enforce its possibilities for more effective cooperation with European structures in the area of security.

16 years of independence is not a long time historically, however for us they are fundamental, enriching and educational. One of a bright pages of this history is studying the international experience of EU, its integration potential, especially in the field of economic relations, solving of social problems in the framework of the European confederation. Tajikistan considered and continues considering EU as the reliable partner in strengthening of economic cooperation and struggle against new world threats.

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