

PRESS RELEASE

Democratic Leaders Unite to Establish "Sunshine Uzbekistan" Reform Movement

Tashkent, April 21, 2005

Economic conditions in Uzbekistan have become so bad that the vast majority of citizens simply cannot afford to properly clothe and feed their children. The source of this misery is 15 years of corruption and mismanagement inflicted on the Uzbek people by the Government of Uzbekistan. Now, however, winds of political change are blowing through the region. The assumption of power by democratic governments in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan has sparked hope in Uzbekistan for peaceful, democratic change. Uzbekistan's best hope for realizing change is the newly formed coalition for national unity "Sunshine Uzbekistan."

The coalition for national unity "Serkuesh Uzbekistonim" (Sunshine Uzbekistan) was organized April 9, 2005 at a meeting called by the leaders of Uzbekistan's democratic reform movement. Participants in the meeting approved the coalition's "Program for Reform" which outlines a fundamental shake-up of the Republic of Uzbekistan's economy. The coalition also called on Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov to work cooperatively with Sunshine Uzbekistan in "creating an open, free market, democratic society."

Uzbekistan is one of America's foremost allies in the War on Terror and is host to a US Air Force base providing support to Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. The Government of Uzbekistan's continuing strong, anti-terrorist stance has earned it limited support from the Bush Administration. However, the Government's appalling human rights records, pervasive corruption and massive economic mismanagement have driven Uzbekistan's civil society to the brink of collapse. Sunshine Uzbekistan's Reform Program embraces respect for human rights, honesty in government, market economics and continued good relations with the United States.

Sunshine Uzbekistan is now calling on support from domestic and international organizations concerned with the promotion of economic and democratic reforms in Uzbekistan. Sunshine Uzbekistan is further developing its Program for Reform into a detailed program for fundamental change that can be supported by all those committed to building a better future for Uzbekistan. As a result, the coalition is asking for input and assistance in the development of policy proposals to be included in the Program for Reform. (Uzbekistan and USA Contact details are included below.)

The leadership of Sunshine Uzbekistan includes representatives from a broad cross-section of Uzbekistan's reform and opposition movements. Membership of the coordinating committee includes (in alphabetical order):

Ekubov, Tolib – Ph.D., Chairman, Human Rights Society Of Uzbekistan
Iskhakov, Faizulla – Ph.D., Professor
Karimov, Olim – Ph.D., Professor, Founder of Ozod Dehkonlar
Khasanov, Dadahon – Poet and popular singer
Khidoyatova, Nigara – Ph.D., General Secretary of Ozod Dehkonlar
Khudaybergenov, Iskandar - Humans rights activist
Khidoyatova, Nadira – Entrepreneur
Mirzaolimov, Alisher – Activist of Ozod Dehkonlar, Entrepreneur
Namazov, Bakhodir – Activist of Ozod Dehkonlar
Umarov, Sanjar – Ph.D., Entrepreneur
Yuldashev, Tashpulat – Ph.D., Independent political scientist

Highlights of Sunshine Uzbekistan's Reform Agenda

Almost all of Uzbekistan's economy is still subject to Soviet-style control by corrupt government bureaucracies. As a result, the citizens of Uzbekistan have never been free to develop their country's

rich agricultural and natural resources. Rather, Uzbekistan's current economic system has driven its citizens to despair for the future. Sunshine Uzbekistan is committed to implementing liberal, free-market economic reforms that will provide Uzbekistan citizens with the ability support their families and build a better future.

Agricultural Reforms

Uzbekistan is primarily an agrarian nation with over 80% of the population dependant on farming. As a result, Sunshine Uzbekistan's reform program emphasizes immediate and practical reforms to stimulate economic growth in Uzbekistan's countryside. Reforms include:

- The rapid transfer of ownership of agricultural lands to private farmers
- De-monopolization and liberalization of cotton production, trade and export
- The establishment of several competing, privately owned and operated cooperatives dedicated to the service, support the development of small, private farms.
- The implementation of a simplified and low-rate tax system for private farmers.

Industrial and Trade Reforms

Uzbekistan is blessed with abundant natural resources, including gold, uranium, oil and gas, which are now controlled by corrupt government bureaucracies for the benefit of a chosen few. Sunshine Uzbekistan's industrial reform program embraces private enterprise and envisions the rapid and transparent privatization of all sectors of industry. Similarly, Sunshine Uzbekistan's reform program will radically liberalize domestic and international trade by eliminating tariff and other administrative restrictions that serve only to feed corruption and starve citizens.

Macroeconomic Reforms

Uzbekistan's Government finances and its state-owned banking system are on the verge of collapse. Years of disastrous economic policy have created mountains of bad debt that have crippled the economy. Economic stagnation has, in turn, aggravated the Government's dismal financial position. Rather than undertaking cardinal macro-economic reforms necessary to fundamentally improve its financial position, the Government has responded with ever more onerous taxes and regulations that are killing private business. Sunshine Uzbekistan's reform program will revive Uzbekistan's economy through the implementation of sound, growth oriented macro-economic policies that will revive private business and restore financial stability.

Call for Support

Sunshine Uzbekistan is the best hope for peaceful, democratic change in Uzbekistan. Support from authoritative international organizations is needed to encourage all those interested in a better future for Uzbekistan to join the National Unity Coalition. Support is also needed in the further development of the Program for Reform. Contact information for Sunshine Uzbekistan and the Program for Reform follows:

[Web site: www.sunshineuzbekistan.org](http://www.sunshineuzbekistan.org)

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