

On Anti-Corruption Enforcement in Uzbekistan

Seitov Azamat Pulatovich
DSc, State University of Uzbekistan
Seitova Leyli Pulatovna
PhD, Ecological Party of Uzbekistan

Abstract: Corruption impedes development of Uzbekistan in different aspects, particularly, this is negatively reflected on provision of favorable business and investment climate. The main principle for solving this large-scale task is the principle of transition from eliminating the consequences of corruption to its early prevention. Thus, the prevention and counteraction of corruption is carried out by eradicating corruption-generating factors in all spheres of state and social construction.

The mass media of Uzbekistan are gradually becoming a real fourth power, influencing the adoption of management decisions by state authorities. The next major step was tax and customs reform. Serious measures were taken to reform the banking sector, accompanied by increased transparency of the Central Bank. Consistency of combating corruption can be traced in the field of education. Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan established in Uzbekistan.

In general, without rooting out corruption, Uzbekistan will not be able to create a really favorable business and investment climate. In this regard, the country has set itself the task of involving all segments of the population, the best specialists, in anti-corruption processes, in order to instill a "vaccine of honesty" in each individual and society.

Keywords: corruption, countercheck, early reporting, elimination of the factors, mass media, tax reform, banking sector, education sector, Agency, vaccine of honesty.

The reform strategy of our country provides that the effectiveness of the measures taken is largely determined by four important factors, namely, ensuring the rule of law, increasing institutional capacity and the formation of strong democratic institutions, as well as effective countercheck. At the beginning of this year, the President of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev, during his Address to Parliament, said that "Unfortunately, the development of the country is hindered by corruption in various forms. If we do not eradicate this vicious phenomenon, we will not be able to create a really favorable business and investment climate, not a single sphere of our society will develop".

Thus, entrepreneurs still face corruption in areas such as the provision of land, cadastral, customs, banking services, licensing, government procurement. This is evidenced by the numerous appeals addressed to the President, messages in the press and social networks - despairingly noted by the head of state.

It is obvious that without eradicating this vicious phenomenon, Uzbekistan will not achieve its development goals. In this regard, the country has set itself the task of

involving all segments of the population, the best specialists, in anti-corruption processes in order to instill a "vaccine of honesty" in each individual and society as a whole.

The main principle for solving this large-scale task is the principle of transition from eliminating the consequences of corruption to its early prevention. Over the past few years, a course has been taken to implement measures to eliminate bureaucratic obstacles and reduce the "shadow economy" in the country, projects "a sphere without corruption" are being implemented. Thus, the prevention and counteraction of corruption is carried out through the eradication of corruption-generating factors in all spheres of state and social construction. Work is underway to improve the system for assessing corruption risks arising from the implementation of tasks and functions assigned to state bodies, the introduction of integrity standards in the civil service.

A special place here is occupied by the work of the National Parlors, which over the years have become not only a reliable support for the population of the country for prompt solutions of the problems of concern to people, but also a real feedback mechanism signaling violations of the legal rights of citizens, including the facts of corruption.

Moreover, in their work, the National parlors strive to fully cover the problems of the population, including through door-to-door rounds, becoming a kind of platform for direct dialogue between heads of state bodies with people. The implementation in practice of this idea of the Head of State made it possible to create a unified mechanism for coordinating the activities of the Cabinet of Ministers, ministries and departments, local government bodies and National Parlors in the field of solving population problems, as well as taking into account incoming applications when developing projects of socio-economic programs of territories. At the same time, National parlors are taking measures to ensure openness, transparency and impartiality in studying the social situation in the regions and solving problems of the population, involving the representatives of the public.

Another important area of combating corruption is a significant turn of the republican and local media towards the real life of ordinary people, the presence of criticism of illegal actions of employees of state power and administration, both in the center and in the field. All this is becoming an everyday routine, in particular, this also applies to a significant increase in the influence on public opinion of the Internet space, bloggers, Telegram channels, social networks (Facebook, Twitter), etc. Thus, the media of Uzbekistan are gradually becoming a real fourth power, influencing the adoption of managerial decisions by the state authorities.

Sh.M. Mirziyoyev on the Day of Press and Mass Media Workers again called on media workers for objectivity and reliability. "Building a law-governed democratic state, we must follow the universally recognized, unshakable requirements and criteria of journalism. The most important of these principles are objectivity and reliability" said the head of state.

Continues the preventive maintenance with corruption in the sphere of elimination of reasons of "shadow economy". In particular, one of the first steps to liberalize the economy of Uzbekistan, taken by the President, was the introduction of

free conversion of the Uzbek sum in relation to foreign currencies. Earlier, there were several exchange rates in the country: the rate of the Central Bank, the rate of non-cash currency, the rate of cash currency, the so-called "black market", etc. Since September 2017, commercial banks of Uzbekistan have begun to buy and sell currency at the market rate.

The next most important step was the tax reform aimed at reducing the tax burden, simplifying the tax system and improving tax administration. The republic also pursues a policy of liberalizing customs and excise tariffs, which have been revised several times over the years. For example, since January last year, the rates of import customs duties have been reduced for 3,410 commodity items, and the excise tax rates - for 780 items. 72% of 11,300 imported goods have a zero customs duty rate.

In Uzbekistan, a course is being implemented to decriminalize the trespass in the field of entrepreneurship that do not pose a great public danger. In particular, criminal liability for such acts as false entrepreneurship or discrediting a competitor will be abolished. It is also supposed to release from criminal liability persons who first committed a violation of customs legislation, subject to the payment of established payments.

Serious measures have been taken to reform the banking sector, accompanied by increased transparency of the Central Bank. Starting from 2020, a large-scale transformation program will be implemented in each bank. The focus will be on increasing the capital, resource base and profitability of banks. The main goal of reforms in the banking sector is the desire to teach commercial banks the customer-oriented work.

It is planned to carry out an inventory of about 3 thousand enterprises with a state share and take measures to drastically reduce the state's participation in those areas where the private sector and competition are developing. Starting from 2020, a radical turn in the development of the "digital economy" will take place. First of all, it is planned to digitalize the spheres of construction, energy, agriculture and water management, transport, geology, healthcare, education, cadastral and archival affairs. As you can see, reducing the share of the state in the economy and increasing the transparency of document circulation eliminates the so-called "human factor - bureaucrat", which considers every economic action from the point of view of a possible "backoff".

The consistency of combating corruption can be traced in the field of education. In particular, a large-scale fight against corruption in universities began in 2017. At the same time, if earlier the emphasis was mainly on punitive measures, today work has been launched to eliminate the causes of corruption. Higher education institutions are gradually provided with academic and financial independence. 10 universities will switch to self-financing in 2020.

The number of quotas for admission to universities is increasing from year to year. University entrance exams have become much more transparent. A completely new vocational education system has been introduced since 2019/2020, organized 340 vocational schools, 147 colleges and 143 technical schools.

Despite the pandemic, 2020 it is planned to build 36 new schools at the expense of the state (1.7 trillion soums of budgetary allocations) and 216 schools were overhauled. It is also envisaged to create 55 private schools, bringing their total to 141. "We should invest into schools today, so we don't have to spend money to solve the social issues", - declared the Head of the State in May of this year. He added that school should bring up patriots, who will bring the benefit to the society.

Reform of education accompanied with the increase of salary of elementary school teachers and university teachers. It is expected to implement the system of progressive salary for teachers. This year, it is planned to introduce a system of progressive remuneration for teachers with great pedagogical skills and relevant qualifications, who have achieved specific results in their activities. It is obvious that fair wages are an effective barrier to the penetration of bribery into education.

In conclusion, it should be noted that an important step has been taken in Uzbekistan, which qualitatively improves the quality and effectiveness of combating corruption. So, in order to consistently implement the State Program for the implementation of the Action Strategy in five priority areas of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021, increase the effectiveness of state policy aimed at preventing and combating corruption the Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan was established in all spheres of society and the state.

This Agency has become a specially authorized state body responsible for the formation and implementation of state policy in the field of preventing and combating corruption, ensuring effective interaction of state bodies, the media, civil society institutions and other representatives of the non-state sector, as well as international cooperation in this area.

At the same time, this Agency will annually prepare a National Report on Combating Corruption in the Republic of Uzbekistan, which is subject to publication in the media, and submitted for consideration to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the chambers of the Supreme Assembly (Oliy Majlis) of the Republic of Uzbekistan. It also interacts with the relevant anti-corruption committees of the Legislative Chamber and the Senate of the Supreme Assembly (Oliy Majlis) of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the relevant committees of local Congress of people's deputies.

Indeed, this Agency is not a universal panacea, and the effectiveness of the fight against corruption as a whole depends on all of us, the presence of a "vaccine of honesty" in society, when everyone in his workplace adheres to the appropriate ethical norms and rules. And this Agency will work in the field of formation and implementation of state policy in the field of preventing and combating corruption, thereby really contributing to the achievement of the strategic objectives of Uzbekistan.

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