

# The Expanding Scales of Interaction

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## **The cooperation between Uzbekistan and China and the friendship bonds between the two peoples have been progressing steadily and enriching with new meaning.**

The state visit by President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov to the People's Republic of China in August 2014 allowed for uplifting the bilateral relations of strategic partnership to a qualitatively new level. More than twenty documents covering projects totaling 5.2 billion US dollars as well as trade agreements for 800 million dollars were inked during that visit. Therefore, agreements were reached for a total of 6 billion dollars, which speaks of the further expansion of cooperation scopes.

The ties between our two nations have been advancing consistently building on the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of Strategic Partnership, the Friendship and Cooperation Treaty, the Joint Declaration on Furthering and Enhancing the Bilateral Relations of Strategic Partnership, along with many other important documents. Crucial in the bilateral relations has been the enlargement of trade-economic, investment, scientific and technological, humanitarian bonds, as well as the consolidation of cooperation in security issues.

Both Uzbekistan and China wield tremendous economic potential. The trade and economic partnership between our two countries has been yielding considerable effects. The volumes of mutual trade turnover have been growing thanks to the shared keen willingness to boost the interaction. Nearly five hundred joint ventures with Chinese investments are set up in Uzbekistan, while more than seventy leading companies of China have their representative offices operating in our country.

Also steadfast have been the scales of investment cooperation. Most businesspeople from the PRC demonstrate enormous interest in the Uzbek market by making investments and establishing joint ventures. Today, China is one of the major investors in the Uzbek market and second biggest in commerce with our nation.

The two countries have been active in their cooperation directed at implementing a great diversity of projects in the hi-tech sector. Notably, an Uzbek-Chinese industrial park of high technologies was founded in 2013 in the form of Jizzakh Special Industrial Zone. The manufacture of mobile phones, construction materials and other goods was launched there. Over 15 joint projects with direct investments from Chinese companies exceeding 50 million dollars are being realized at the Jizzakh SIZ. That is a bright manifestation of the effectiveness of trade-economic partnership between our two nations.

The fuel and energy industry also displays the scales of cooperation. The passage of four lines of the Central Asia-China natural gas pipeline through the territory of our country is suggestive of the high level of mutual confidence and shared interest. Chinese companies have been energetic in prospecting and developing hydrocarbon deposits in Uzbekistan.

A railway linking the two countries has been under joint construction, which is expected to secure an access for Uzbekistan to China and the East Asian nations, and for the PRC to the countries of Central and South Asia.

The relations between Uzbekistan and China have been dynamic also within the frameworks of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which offers a distinct platform for both countries in ensuring security, stability and development in the region.

The relations in the cultural-humanitarian sphere have also been important. The establishment of

Confucius Institute in Tashkent – the first one in Central Asia – is indicative of the steadily advancement of mutual interaction in the education sector. In June 2010, an Uzbek language division was opened at China's Central University for Nationalities. Teaching of Uzbek was launched in the 2012/2013 academic year at the Beijing University of Foreign Languages. Great interest is visible in Uzbekistan toward the Chinese language and literature, while the Uzbek language, culture, traditions and the country in general enjoy a keen interest in China.

Effective and dynamic relations are established among the representatives of culture and arts from the two countries. Chinese musicians have been regular in the Sharq Taronalari international music festival organized in Samarkand. In addition, culture figures of both nations are active in a variety of exhibitions and cultural events held in Uzbekistan and the PRC.

The friendship societies "Uzbekistan-China" and "People's Republic of China – Central Asian Countries" are rather instrumental in cementing the cultural-humanitarian ties.

The two sides attach a special significance to cooperation in tourism. Uzbekistan's potential and capacities in this sphere are regularly demonstrated at international travel fairs held in China. Importance of the establishment of sister relations between the cities of Tashkent and Shanghai, Samarkand and Xi'an, Navoi and Zhuzhou, the Tashkent Region and Hunan Province, the Samarkand Region and Shaanxi Province is also worth noting.

Growth in interrelations demands the enhancement of information exchange. To this end, particular emphasis is placed thus on furthering the information and expertise swap among mass media in Uzbekistan and China. Recently, a group of Uzbek journalists traveled to Chinese cities of Beijing and Qingdao, where they were introduced to the activities of print and internet publications, television and radio channels, as well as to training cadres and raising the proficiency of specialists in this area.

The ties between Uzbekistan and China are to keep advancing persistently building on the principles of mutual confidence, respect, equality, will, strategic partnership, while the friendship bonds between our two peoples are to enhance to an even greater extent.

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