

### **III. МИНТАҚАВИЙ РИВОЖЛАНИШ ТРЕНДЛАРИ**

*Тренды регионального развития*

*Trends of Regional Development*

### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT: PROSPECTS FOR UZBEKISTAN**

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**Abstract:** *This article highlights the important connection between environmental security and national security, emphasizing the urgency of ensuring the safety of both the environment and human well-being from potential harm caused by human activities. The article highlights the global call to action through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to improve well-being and protect the planet. The study identifies the key elements of sustainable development - economic growth, social protection, environmental safety, spiritual and moral revival, institutional reforms and legal frameworks - as interrelated and complementary. It addresses the green economy, social protection measures and integrated environmental security policies, including legislative, managerial, technical and biological aspects.*

*The article analyzes and systematizes various levels of environmental threats and their effective management. The role of institutions, legal frameworks, international cooperation and strategic priorities for ensuring the environmental safety of Uzbekistan is highlighted. In conclusion, the need for an integrated approach to the problem of ensuring a sustainable environment for future generations is emphasized.*

**Keywords:** *green economy, environment, sustainable development, environmental education, social protection, institutional reforms, comprehensive strategies, Uzbekistan.*

#### **Introduction**

Ensuring environmental security is of paramount importance in the broader context of national security, as it includes a set of activities, processes and actions aimed at maintaining environmental balance and protecting nature and human well-being (B. Kutsyuruba et al., 2015). Creating conditions for environmental safety ensures the protection of important interests of the individual, society, state and environment from potential harm or threats emanating from human influence or technology (N. Panwar et al., 2011). Environmental safety refers to a state in which the natural environment and public health are not under immediate threat. This includes the protection of human rights, material and spiritual interests, natural resources and the environment, serving as the basis for the development of the state and society.

In a global context, the Sustainable Development Goals (S. Parkin, 2000) serve as a universal call to action, supported by countries of all economic statuses. These goals are aimed at improving well-being and preserving the planet, recognizing that the eradication of poverty must be accompanied by measures to address environmental, educational, health, social and employment problems, including the fight against climate change (N. Alfievich et al., 2023; R. Mori Jr. et al., 2019).

Sustainable development is based on several key components, including economic growth, social protection, environmental safety, spiritual and moral revival, institutional reforms and improvement of the legal framework, state and social construction. These components are interconnected and complement each other, playing an important role in achieving sustainable development.

**Economic growth** is a key element of sustainable development, which must be achieved through sustainable, cost-effective and environmentally sound approaches, especially in the energy sector. It should be based on the principles of a green economy, encouraging the adoption of advanced, environmentally friendly technologies in all sectors. Adequate funds must be allocated for health, environmental protection, integrated resource management and pollution control. The transition to a green economy is necessary to achieve sustainable development and social stability (R. Owen et al., 2018; G. Semeniuk et al., 2021).

**Social protection** is another important aspect of sustainable development, requiring measures to reduce poverty, preserve human health and well-being, promote regional sustainability and integrate strong environmental requirements into social and economic decision-making. It is necessary to determine social support measures depending on the ecological zone and take into account the environmental conditions and health of the population of specific regions (M. Alexandrova, 2020; Cho et al., 2012).

**Environmental safety** plays a key role in maintaining the well-being of ecological systems, including the atmosphere, water bodies, land areas, fauna (A. Kovacs et al., 2021; N. Muradov and T. Veziroglu, 2008) and flora, which are interconnected and interdependent. Negative impacts on any of the components can have far-reaching consequences for the entire ecosystem. Achieving environmental safety requires an integrated approach, including forecasting, planning and management, minimizing negative impacts on people and balancing

economic growth, industrial development, agriculture and other sectors of the economy.

In today's connected world, every action, especially those that affect nature, ultimately has a global impact. However, humanity's increasing demands for resources place significant strain on the Earth's natural resources, leading to their rapid depletion. This unfettered exploitation, coupled with poor resource management, poses a man-made threat to human health and the environment, undermining global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Today the world lives in conditions of political, economic, environmental, and climate determinism.

This paradigm is also inherent in our country.

From our point of view, sustainable development depends on **Six key factors: economic growth, social protection, environmental safety, spiritual and moral revival, institutional development and improvement of the legal foundations of state and social construction.** Only through the harmonious interaction of these factors can we ensure sustainable progress for our country.

To achieve environmental security while promoting economic growth, it is necessary to actively promote the principles of a green economy. A sustainable green economy (E. Loiseau et al., 2016) uses administrative and market instruments to stimulate production through innovative technologies. It includes the introduction of technologies with minimal waste generation and renewable energy sources with the goal of achieving a 40% share of green energy in the overall energy system of Uzbekistan by 2030.

To ensure environmental safety, a new approach to economic mechanisms governing environmental management is also required. Currently, there are no integrated approaches and strategic planning in the field of environmental protection, and the powers of environmental authorities to effectively carry out their tasks are insufficient. The impacts of human activities, reflected in indicators such as public health, air quality, water standards and biodiversity, highlight the urgent need to improve economic mechanisms.

Fundamentally, economic regulation of environmental activities is based on a market approach, including optimal management of natural resources and the right to consume or pollute the environment (G.Semeniuk et al., 2021). Integration of environmental and economic policies are now inextricably linked to a functioning economy. This integration includes addressing “market failures” and effectively integrating environmental factors into the market system, prioritizing

environmental economic mechanisms, renewable potential of natural resources, increasing financial resources for environmental protection, and incentivizing stakeholders to prioritize resource management. and environmental protection.

The next important step in the implementation of economic mechanisms is the creation of a payment system to combat the irrational use of natural resources (S. Ambek and R. Lanois , 2008; A. Gasparatos et al., 2017). Given that energy and resource costs per unit of production in our country are higher compared to leading developed countries, legislative, financial and tax measures should form the basis of these economic mechanisms.

### **A harmonious approach to ecosystem sustainability in a market economy**

To achieve ecosystem sustainability within a market economy, an integrated approach is required that takes into account the complex interrelationship and interdependence of all components. This approach involves addressing key challenges to achieve our goals.

Stabilization of the environmental situation: We must work to stabilize environmental conditions by implementing measures that mitigate existing problems and prevent their further deterioration. This requires proactive steps to improve the environment, such as promoting green economic activities, introducing institutional and structural changes and moving towards a green economy.

Sustainable use of natural resources and combating environmental problems: to ensure the long-term conservation of our ecosystems, we must implement measures to sustainably manage use of natural resources, combating desertification and drought, effectively managing waste management, adopting safe practices in handling toxic chemicals, implementing environmentally friendly agricultural practices and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

**Encouraging sustainable economic activity:** It is important to encourage economic activity that operates within the capabilities of our ecosystems. This can be achieved through the widespread introduction of energy and resource-saving technologies, as well as changes in consumer behavior patterns. In this way, we can achieve a balance between economic development and conservation of our natural resources.

**Stopping ecosystem destruction and biodiversity loss:** Protecting vulnerable ecosystems and preventing further loss of biodiversity must be high on our priorities. This includes creating favorable conditions for the functioning of ecosystems and expanding protected areas. Organizations such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Convention on Biological Diversity play an important role in achieving these goals.

To further improve the management of our natural resources, the costs and benefits of proposed environmental policies need to be carefully analyzed, taking into account both short and long-term impacts (S. Ambek and R. Lanois, 2008). This comprehensive assessment must be integrated into programs and projects related to economic and social development, providing a deep understanding of our potential to use natural resources.

In addition, adopting a territorial and regional approach to nature management promotes more targeted and effective strategies. It is necessary to implement requirements that ensure strict adherence to environmental safety standards, treating environmental safety as equally important as national security, public welfare and personal safety.

To successfully achieve these goals, it is necessary to unconditionally implement the “Concept of environmental protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030” (A. Tleuke et al., 2022) and the “Strategy for the transition to a green economy.” In addition, the restoration of a unified system for preparing an annual national report on the state of the environment and the use of natural resources in Uzbekistan is essential for monitoring progress and making informed decisions.

By adopting this harmonious approach and pursuing these strategies, we can contribute to the sustainability of ecosystems, promoting a harmonious balance between economic prosperity and environmental conservation.

### **Levels of environmental threats and their impact on sustainable development**

To achieve sustainable development, it is critical to understand the different levels of environmental threats and their consequences. These threats can be divided into four levels: global, regional, national and local. At the global level, we face such problems as climate change, water depletion and pollution, loss of biodiversity, melting glaciers and the Aral Sea disaster (E. Lyubimtseva and R. Cole, 2006; A. Sorg et al., 2012). These issues are recognized by international

organizations such as the UN, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Moving to the regional level, we are faced with problems of transboundary pollution, challenges in the field of water resources, generation and accumulation of waste, desertification and natural and man-made disasters. Organizations such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification address regional environmental threats.

At the national level, threats include water shortages and pollution, insufficient quality of drinking water, irrational use of natural and energy resources, land degradation, air pollution, impacts on the gene pool of flora and fauna, impacts on public health, and accumulation of industrial and household waste. , insufficient use of resource conservation technologies and an increased risk of collapses and landslides. In this regard, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNID) are among the organizations that focus on national environmental threats.

Finally, at the local level, there are pollution problems in specific regions, such as cities and regions, air pollution from vehicle emissions, degradation of ecosystems in certain areas, and noise pollution in cities and industrial centers. The Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan, regional and municipal environmental reports clarify these local environmental threats.

In the current era of rapid global change, sustainable development requires consideration not only of the physical aspects, but also of the spiritual and moral state of society, especially the younger generation. Uzbekistan has made significant strides in improving its legislative framework, promoting new environmental thinking and increasing environmental awareness among the population. The adoption of legislative provisions to protect environmental rights, restore and protect the environment and address environmental problems in the Aral Sea region reflects this progress.

However, ecology should not remain the prerogative of only the environmental community. It should become a philosophy of life accepted by government agencies, public associations and other institutions of civil society,

by every citizen. The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Uzbekistan, and current environmental legislation emphasize the importance of developing environmental awareness at all levels of society.

Collecting reliable, evidence-based information is critical to a comprehensive assessment of environmental threats and careful analysis.

The introduction of a unified system for preparing an annual national report on the state of the environment and the rational use of natural resources in Uzbekistan is necessary. In addition, modern indicators should be developed to accurately assess environmental pollution and resource use.

**To ensure the environmental safety of Uzbekistan, the following areas should be considered priority:**

- Rational and integrated use of natural resources, including water, land, mineral and biological resources;
- Reducing environmental pollution to levels consistent with standards and regulations, and improving environmental and sanitary conditions;
- Comprehensive measures to restore and improve the environmental condition of vulnerable regions, such as the Aral Sea region;
- Access of the population to high-quality drinking water, food and medicine;
- Introduction of environmentally friendly and resource-saving technologies;
- Development of scientific and technical capabilities in the field of environmental sciences and technologies;
- Introduction of an economic mechanism that integrates environmental requirements into socio-economic decision-making;
- Creation of experimental ecological zones promoting sustainable development;
- Creation of a unified system for environmental monitoring, forecasting and information dissemination;
- Development of methodologies for assessing noise pollution, vibration and
- Strengthening services for monitoring and protection against transboundary environmental pollution;
- Prevention and mitigation of environmental disasters, emergencies and accidents;
- Improving the system of environmental education and training, culture and public awareness programs;

- Creation of a unified regional system of environmental safety in Central Asia;
- Deepening cooperation with the international community to solve environmental problems.

Prioritizing these areas will allow Uzbekistan to make significant progress in ensuring environmental well-being and sustainable development. Active participation in international efforts to address environmental issues is also critical to a comprehensive approach to global challenges.

### **Improving institutional management for sustainable development**

The effective development of state institutions is an important component of sustainable development, which covers various aspects, ranging from social and economic-financial to international, political, legal, cultural, technical and environmental. Improving institutional governance requires the creation of a robust system of legislation and regulations that promote environmentally friendly practices and ensure their effective implementation (S. Pan et al., 2018).

To achieve effective governance of these institutions, relevant structures must continuously review their approaches and methods, remaining responsive to the changing needs of society and informed about best practices to meet development challenges. These proactive measures will enable the activation of public policies related to environmental safety. They include the prevention and mitigation of environmental threats, optimization and monitoring of the environmental situation, as well as strengthening the responsibility of ministries, departments, local authorities, public organizations and every citizen of the Republic of Uzbekistan for achieving sustainable development.

By taking these steps, relevant institutions can align their activities with global standards and effectively contribute to sustainable development. The World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations Development Program emphasize the importance of improving institutional governance to achieve these goals, recognizing its key role in creating sustainable and environmentally conscious societies.



## **Changes made to the Constitution and environmental safety in Uzbekistan**

Strengthening the legal foundations of state and public management is an integral task in a rapidly changing world (A. Massey and K. Johnston -Miller, 2016; Tleuken et al., 2022).

In Uzbekistan, significant efforts are being made to comprehensively improve the organization of government power and interaction between the legislative and executive powers. According to the updated Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, adopted at the Referendum on April 30, 2023, the powers of the parliament, its Legislative Chamber and the Senate are strengthened by expanding the exclusive powers of both chambers: the Legislative Chamber - from 5 to 12, and the Senate - from 14 to 18. Included in the Main The law changes provide for a more democratic process for appointing the Prime Minister, with the President consulting with all factions of political parties, thereby promoting a more inclusive and democratic approach.

It is well known in the field of environmental sustainability that the integration of environmental aspects into development strategies is essential for long-term economic sustainability (R. Goodland, 1995). Uzbekistan recognizes the need to create an integrated system for ensuring environmental safety and is taking measures to prevent, mitigate and eliminate environmental threats. Uzbekistan has an extensive regulatory framework, including many laws and regulations devoted to nature conservation, protected natural areas, sanitary and epidemiological well-being, water and water use, subsoil resources, protection of flora and fauna, protection of atmospheric air, forestry, waste management , environmental control, renewable energy sources and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and many others.

The new edition of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan includes norms stating that: everyone has the right to a favorable environment and reliable information about its condition; about the obligation to protect natural heritage; about the obligation to take care of the environment; on state protection and rational use of land, its subsoil, water, flora and fauna and other natural resources, as well as other provisions.

It should be separately emphasized that according to the new edition of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan:

- the state creates conditions for public control in the field of urban planning activities in order to ensure the environmental rights of citizens and prevent harmful impacts on the environment;

- draft urban planning documents are subject to public discussion in the manner prescribed by law;

- the state, in accordance with the principle of sustainable development, implements measures to improve, restore and protect the environment, maintain ecological balance;

- the state is taking measures to protect and restore the ecological system, social and economic development of the Aral Sea region.

Thus, we see that the new edition of the country's Basic Law includes provisions that take into account that the sustainable development of the state is based not only on economic growth, social protection, institutional changes, but also on ensuring the environmental safety of its citizens. This, in turn, testifies to an integrated approach to the formation of a democratic, legal, social and secular state that ensures the rights and interests of its citizens, protecting their honor and dignity, which was defined in the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan.

To ensure the environmental rights of citizens and prevent negative impacts on the environment, the government proposes measures of public control in urban planning (S. Swanvik et al., 2003). This includes amending the existing law on environmental control in terms of public environmental control and introducing a method for assessing the intensity of climate change in the regions of Uzbekistan. In addition, the government is focusing efforts on the development of environmentally friendly and alternative energy sources, such as technologies for the production and use of hydrogen energy.

Agriculture in Uzbekistan is solving the problem of soil degradation and the negative consequences of intensive agricultural practices by introducing innovative biogrotechnologies for cultivating crops on degraded soils. These technologies have demonstrated positive results in terms of resource conservation, economic benefits, environmental improvements and social impact. Government initiatives such as the "Yashil makon" (Green Space) and the planting of drought-resistant plants on the former bed of the Aral Sea testify to his commitment to solving environmental and climate problems.

Overall, Uzbekistan is making significant steps in strengthening the legal framework for governance and environmental sustainability practices.

At the same time, there is a need to clarify the concept of environmental sustainability.

In accordance with the global Sustainable Development Goals, national sustainable development goals have been approved in Uzbekistan, there are 16 of them with the exception of the goal “Conservation and rational use of oceans, seas and marine resources in the interests of sustainable development,” given that the country is landlocked. Relevant strategies, programs, plans and decisions of the Government have been developed and adopted, and government bodies are taking the necessary measures aimed at achieving these goals.

However, it appears that some aspects of this topic have not yet received sufficient scientific justification.

Experts of the Senate Committee of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan on issues of development of the Aral Sea region and ecology, revealing the goals and content of national SDGs, propose to discuss the concept of creating ecological territories (zones) of sustainable development in Uzbekistan.

All 16 national sustainable development goals must be implemented in these territories:

- the level of poverty among the population has been reduced;
- strengthened food security, improved diets and promoted sustainable agricultural development;
- Ensure healthy lifestyles and promote well-being for everyone at all ages;
- ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;
- ensure gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls;
- water resources are conserved and rationally used in the interests of sustainable development, their availability is ensured and sanitation is developed for all;
- access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy sources is ensured for all;
- promoted sustainable and inclusive economic growth through increased productive employment and decent work for men and women;
- building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and innovation;
- inequality in all its forms has been reduced;

- ensure openness, safety, resilience and environmental sustainability of cities and towns;
- a transition to rational consumption and production models has been ensured;
- urgent action has been taken to combat climate change and its impacts;
- protect and restore terrestrial ecosystems and promote their sustainable use, sustainable forest management, combating desertification, halting and reversing land degradation and halting the loss of biological diversity;
- turns out to contribute to building peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, ensuring access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and participatory institutions at all levels;

The means to implement and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development are being strengthened.

To put it briefly, ensuring the sustainable development of a territory should be modeled taking into account all components and their interconnectedness, as well as interdependence and aimed at consistently solving the following tasks: firstly, to ensure stabilization of the environmental situation in a market economy; secondly, to radically improve the state of the environment through the greening of economic activities within the framework of institutional and structural transformations, allowing for the widespread dissemination of environmentally oriented management methods and, in general, the transition to a “green economy”; thirdly, to implement measures aimed at the rational use of natural resources, combating desertification and drought, solving the waste problem, increasing the safety of the use of toxic chemicals, and the environmentally friendly use of agrobiotechnology; fourth, to introduce economic activity within the limits of ecosystem capacity through the widespread introduction of energy and resource-saving technologies, as well as targeted changes in the structure of personal and public consumption; fifthly, to stop the destruction and disappearance of endangered ecosystems and certain types of biodiversity, create conditions for the normal functioning of ecosystems, and expand the network of protected natural areas.

The creation of experimental ecological territories (zones) for sustainable development and practical testing of their functioning would make it possible to develop mechanisms for disseminating the experience of such zones in various

regions of the republic, which could become drivers of sustainable development of the regions and the country as a whole.

### **Strategic priorities and key components of ensuring environmental safety in Uzbekistan**

Strategic priorities for ensuring sustainable environmental security in Uzbekistan can be divided into seven key categories.

Firstly, this includes the adoption of green economy principles and the introduction of economic mechanisms to regulate interactions between government agencies and natural resource users at different levels. This involves integrating environmental concerns into socio-economic assessments of management decisions.

Secondly, emphasis is placed on reducing environmental pollution to meet environmental, hygiene and health standards.

Thirdly, the emphasis is on rational and integrated use of natural resources such as water, land, minerals and biological resources, while supporting the introduction of alternative and renewable energy sources.

The fourth priority includes improving the unified system of environmental monitoring, forecasting and information dissemination.

The fifth priority is the introduction of comprehensive measures to localize, restore and improve the ecological condition of environmentally unfavorable territories, such as the Aral Sea region through the introduction of environmentally friendly innovative technologies.

Sixth priority is the development of environmental education, increasing culture and awareness of the population, especially young people.

Finally, the seventh priority is strengthening cooperation with the international community to solve environmental problems.

To establish a robust and comprehensive national environmental security framework in Uzbekistan, several key components must be considered. These components include addressing regional security issues related to the management of transboundary water resources, combating threats such as transboundary pollution, preserving ecological systems and improving the environmental situation in general. Extensive research and application work is needed to encourage the adoption of advanced innovative technologies and environmentally oriented programs and investment projects. Economic incentives should be developed to encourage green production, sustainable use of natural

resources and a gradual transition to a green economy. In addition, it is necessary to develop markets for environmental services, such as ecotourism and environmentally friendly products, technologies and equipment.

This comprehensive approach to ensuring a unified and comprehensive environmental safety in Uzbekistan is determined by the economic, environmental and social conditions of the country. It is important to translate conceptual frameworks into actionable plans and facilitate the transition to a sustainable development model that takes into account the interests of current and future generations.

### **Conclusion**

Ensuring environmental safety and achieving sustainable development are essential conditions for well-being of people, society and the planet. Uzbekistan recognizes the importance of environmental security and is taking decisive steps to integrate environmental aspects into its development strategies.

There is no doubt that the role and significance of constitutional norms in the implementation of environmental policy is enormous. Therefore, the proposals put forward by ecologists and other groups of the country's population formed the basis of the new norms of the Basic Law, and consolidate the most important principles for the formation of environmental activities of government bodies and public organizations, provide guarantees of environmental rights and interests of individuals, establish environmental responsibilities, and determine priority areas for environmentally sustainable development society and state.

Uzbekistan recognizes the global significance of environmental problems and the need for joint efforts to solve them. The country has adopted the principles of sustainable development and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, recognizing that the eradication of poverty must be accompanied by measures to address environmental, social and employment issues.

To achieve sustainable development, Uzbekistan emphasizes the importance of economic growth, social protection and environmental safety. The priority is to transition to a green economy, encourage the adoption of environmentally friendly technologies and allocate adequate funds for health, environmental protection and pollution reduction. By 2030, the country aims to achieve a 40% share of green energy in the country's overall energy balance.

Environmental security plays a key role in maintaining the well-being of ecosystems and requires an integrated approach that includes forecasting, planning and management. Uzbekistan recognizes the levels of environmental threats at the global, regional, national and local levels and strives to address them through measures such as sustainable use of natural resources, combating environmental pollution, promoting sustainable economic activity and halting the destruction of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity.

To achieve these goals, Uzbekistan must prioritize the implementation of its “Concept of Environmental Protection until 2030” and the Strategy for the Transition to a Green Economy. It is important to establish a unified system for compiling annual national reports on the state of the environment and natural resource use, collect reliable evidence-based information and develop modern indicators to accurately measure environmental pollution and integrated use of natural resources.

Uzbekistan's commitment to environmental safety extends to promoting environmental consciousness and increasing environmental awareness among the population. By deepening cooperation with the international community, Uzbekistan can actively contribute to solving environmental problems and achieving an integrated approach to sustainable development.

The efforts of Uzbekistan in the field of ensuring environmental safety and sustainable development deserve special attention. By prioritizing economic growth, social protection and environmental well-being, improving institutional governance and implementing constitutional norms that promote sustainable development, Uzbekistan can help create a harmonious balance between economic prosperity and environmental protection. These actions will contribute to the well-being of present and future generations and to building a sustainable future.

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