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Research Article

STRATEGY "UZBEKISTAN - 2030": WAYS TO SUPPORT COMPATRIOTS LIVING ABROAD

Submission Date: November 20, 2023, Accepted Date: November 25, 2023,

Published Date: November 30, 2023 |

Crossref doi: <https://doi.org/10.37547/tajpslc/Volume05Issue11-07>

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the implications and strategies outlined in Uzbekistan's "Strategy-2030" for engaging with its diaspora. The comprehensive analysis covers the diverse contributions of the diaspora in economic, social, human, and cultural sectors, aligning with key principles identified in diaspora engagement policies. The study applauds the multifaceted approach of the strategy and offers recommendations for institutionalizing diaspora participation, unifying definitions, and establishing discussion platforms to foster practical realization of rights and obligations. The "Strategy-2030" is seen as a pivotal step, creating a foundation for long-term cooperation and mutual understanding between Uzbekistan and its compatriots abroad.

KEYWORDS

Diaspora engagement, Strategy-2030, compatriots, institutionalization, transnational identity, economic development, consular services, cultural preservation, policy recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

Compatriots living outside their homelands and their diasporas play an important role in strengthening ties between countries and nations in today's globalized and increasingly mobile world.

The adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan on April 30, 2023, served to strengthen the

constitutional foundations for the construction of a New Uzbekistan.

Article 23 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan stipulates the State's duty to take care of the preservation and development of relations with compatriots living abroad in accordance with the

norms of international law. The category "resettlement of compatriots" or "compatriots" is not reflected in international law, so the regulation of this process is subject to the generally recognized principles of international law related to human rights, including migration and the protection of national minorities.

In order to aspire to building a new and prosperous Uzbekistan, where every citizen is provided with opportunities to unlock his or her potential, raise a healthy, educated and spiritually developed generation, build a strong economy, integrate into global production, and ensure justice, the rule of law, security and stability in society, Presidential Decree No. UP-158 of 11.09.2023 approved the Strategy "Uzbekistan - 2030", developed on the basis of the acquired in the process of implementation of the Strategy.

Compatriots abroad may be in their country of residence as citizens, foreign citizens and stateless persons. They can unite in so-called "diasporas" to jointly support and protect their interests. There is no common opinion on the concept of diaspora in international law.

Specialists distinguish three criteria that together define diaspora::

1. dispersion in space;
2. orientation to a real or imagined homeland as an authoritative source of values, identity, and loyalty;
3. maintaining a distinctive identity from the host state or society.

Legal science identifies five types of diaspora-oriented policies:

I. An expatriate state that pursues cultural and educational policies to maintain ties with high-income citizens abroad, such as the UK and Germany;

II. A closed state that tightly regulates or seeks to restrict the mobility of its population, e.g., Cuba and Iran;

III. A global nation-state interested in extracting economic and political resources from populations abroad, e.g., Mexico and Morocco;

IV. Managed labor states united by the provision of investment schemes for returnees, e.g., the Philippines;

V. An indifferent state that largely ignores population living outside its own borders, e.g. Lebanon.

It should be noted that there are three different approaches to the definition of "compatriots" in Uzbekistan's legislative documents. In particular, article 3 of the Citizenship of the Republic of Uzbekistan Act establishes that persons who were born in the territory of Uzbekistan or previously resided in its territory, who did not have citizenship of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and who reside outside the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan may become compatriots.

According to paragraph 2 of the Concept of State Policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the field of cooperation with compatriots living abroad, approved by Presidential Decree PD-3982 of October 25, 2019, citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan permanently residing outside the territory of Uzbekistan or temporarily going abroad in connection with education, employment, family circumstances and other circumstances are also compatriots.

Also the term compatriots is defined in the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan № 326 "On Approval of the Regulations on the procedure for issuing invitations and granting multiple entry visas to the Republic of Uzbekistan for compatriots living abroad and members of their families, as well as their registration at the place of temporary stay by internal affairs bodies" dated 17.04.2019 as a category of persons defined for the purposes of this Regulation, which includes natives of the Republic of Uzbekistan who went abroad and obtained citizenship of a foreign country.

Diaspora engagement policies, their forms, advantages or disadvantages are still a matter of debate. Scholars explain and discuss several typologies of diaspora engagement policies, putting forward their hypotheses as to why states choose one or another terminology when developing diaspora engagement.

Policies of engagement with diasporas, their forms, advantages or disadvantages are a matter of debate. Levitt and de la Dehesa, studying the experiences of Brazil, Mexico, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, identify five main types of engagement with the diaspora:

1. bureaucratic reforms;
2. policies to attract investment;
3. political empowerment;
4. expansion of public services abroad;
5. symbolic policies aimed at strengthening national identity.

As part of bureaucratic reforms, states are "responding to the increasing importance of emigrants and their descendants to policy makers". Investment

attraction policies target migrant remittances. Political empowerment provides non-residents, at a minimum, with access to citizenship and suffrage. By extending public services abroad, states introduce public services or protections for diaspora communities. Finally, symbolic policies aim to maintain and strengthen the national identity, sense of belonging and long-term membership of the diaspora abroad.

A. Gamlen categorizes the policy of interaction with the diaspora into:

1. capacity building;
2. empowering the diaspora;
3. capitalizing on the diaspora.

Gamlen also distinguished two subtypes within capacity building policy - "symbolic state-building" and "institution-building". Symbolic policy includes a wide range of initiatives and programs aimed at increasing emigrants' sense of belonging to the transnational community of compatriots. In institution-building policies, the state creates systems and institutions to manage the diaspora population. It has also been discussed that the expansion of civil and social rights can contribute to the strengthening of a shared national identity and that extracting obligations without expanding rights cannot be beneficial to diasporas.

O. Nielsen examines states' policies towards the diaspora in three main areas. In the economic sphere, the policy of states is primarily aimed at attracting the economic resources of emigrants. States of origin can promote the establishment of special banking institutions that make remittances more convenient and accessible. States can encourage the spending of emigrants' money in the country of origin, including through the development of emigrant tourism.

In the political sphere, States grant political rights to non-resident citizens. Governments of States of origin may facilitate the retention and transfer of citizenship to emigrants by reforming rules on the acquisition and loss of citizenship, including dual citizenship, or by issuing identity cards that grant a certain set of rights and voting rights to non-resident citizens.

In the social sphere, States develop policies to extend social rights (pensions, access to health care during vacations) or make these rights transferable, for example through bilateral or multilateral social security agreements. This area also includes a cultural dimension, where States offer educational programs for the descendants of emigrants or support cultural centers or schools abroad. Finally, States may also have other recognition policies, such as organizing diaspora conferences that celebrate the achievements of their members.

With regard to the modalities of working with destination countries, there are also different approaches of States in dealing with diasporas. In line with globalization and development goals, some states may opt for more inclusive policies towards immigrants. Newland looks at cooperation policies between countries of origin and destination and proposes a co-development approach that places diasporas at the center of the partnership. The co-development approach views diasporas and their members as a bridge between two countries that share the past and present reality of migration. This approach seeks to promote the integration of immigration and development so that migration benefits both countries of origin and destination and is not unprofitable for the country of origin.

Another approach that is also being discussed in academia is the leverage approach. This approach views diasporas as resources with the potential to

achieve the development and foreign policy objectives of the destination or home country. Leveraging diasporas draws on diaspora expertise in designing and implementing projects, utilizing diaspora networks, and consulting with diaspora groups or individuals on specific issues.

Accordingly, there is no universally effective model for states to engage with diasporas. The study of the term "diaspora" has shown that different factors influence the understanding of diaspora in each context. Moreover, each diaspora has a unique set of needs and capacities based on different aspects of the past and present. Nevertheless, a diaspora engagement strategy may include all or some of the characteristics discussed.

The Republic of Uzbekistan, realizing the importance of this diaspora community, has developed and is actively implementing in the strategy "Uzbekistan - 2030", a number of ways to support and interact with compatriots living abroad.

Purpose 94 of the Strategy prioritizes the provision of support to compatriots living abroad through the electronic online portal of the Public Foundation "Vatandoshlar", which is an important resource for compatriots living abroad. The portal provides information and legal assistance, becoming an accessible source of information on the rights and obligations of compatriots in their countries of residence.

Compatriots can get advice and recommendations on solving various legal issues related to their status, rights and obligations in the countries where they reside.

However, this portal is not limited only to informational and legal support. It also provides an opportunity to

receive financial support for compatriots in difficult situations, based on the application for financial assistance and benefits in accordance with the established criteria.

Thus, the establishment a system of communication and emergency support through an electronic online portal is an important tool to ensure the protection of the rights and interests of compatriots living abroad and will help establish a reliable bridge between them and their homeland. The system demonstrates the state's concern for its citizens, regardless of their location, and contributes to maintaining close ties between Uzbekistan and its diaspora.

In order to improve ties and support compatriots abroad, the strategy provides for the formation of volunteer groups from among active compatriots in foreign countries. These groups are actively involved in organizing and conducting events aimed at supporting the diaspora and maintaining ties with Uzbekistan.

Volunteers provide social and material support to compatriots by collecting and distributing humanitarian aid, providing emotional support, and assisting in solving domestic issues. They also help to establish charitable funds and organizations, promote the establishment and development of cooperation between compatriots and authorities in their countries of residence.

Volunteers also collect information about the needs and problems of compatriots and pass this information to the relevant bodies and organizations in Uzbekistan, thus contributing to a real understanding of the needs of the diaspora

Another important aspect of the strategy is to support scientific and creative research aimed at raising the prestige of Uzbekistan among scientists and creative

compatriots. Effective cooperation in scientific research will strengthen the bond between the diaspora and Uzbekistan. Supporting joint scientific projects, research, holding scientific conferences and seminars will form a platform for the exchange of ideas and experience between the Diaspora and the scientific community of Uzbekistan and will allow the Diaspora to make a valuable contribution to the development of Uzbek science.

The adoption of the Strategy makes Uzbekistan more attractive to scientists and creators from the diaspora, which in turn will strengthen cultural and scientific ties between the country and its compatriots abroad.

The Strategy envisages improvement of the legislative base in the field of support for compatriots living abroad. An important part of this initiative is the introduction of a "Compatriot ID", which will allow them to use state services such as education, medical care and real estate acquisition on an equal footing with citizens. At the same time, the involvement of compatriots in business and investment activities contributes not only to the economic development of the country, but also to the strengthening of ties with the diaspora. Various support measures will be implemented, such as tax incentives, simplified procedures for setting up a business, consultations and assistance in finding investment opportunities.

In particular, the allocation of subsidies for the costs of obtaining a qualification certificate, travel ticket and "work visa";

- provision of concessional microloans of up to 10 million som to cover the costs of traveling abroad and employment;
- full coverage of the costs of travel tickets and work visas for citizens seeking high-paying jobs in developed countries;

- attaching social workers to the families of citizens who have traveled abroad to work, and creating a system to help their children use social services in education, medicine and other areas;
- establishing measures for special care for family members of citizens who have died abroad, education and vocational training for their children;
- expanding the scope of health and life insurance for citizens traveling abroad to work;

As part of the strategy, Uzbekistan is also actively developing cooperation with international organizations and other countries to effectively combat illegal migration and human trafficking.

Supporting institutional activities in the area of diaspora engagement is a key factor for successful cooperation. Hundreds of institutions are engaged in diaspora engagement around the world, and many countries have developed a comprehensive infrastructure for working with citizens abroad and coordinating diaspora activities. These institutions represent a myriad of entry points for diaspora engagement in national processes.

A diaspora engagement institution is a governmental or parastatal organization whose mandate is solely or partially to provide services to the diaspora and/or create an enabling environment for diaspora engagement.

Very few authors have proposed typologies of diaspora institutions. The IOM-IPI Guide for Policy Makers and Practitioners in Countries of Origin and Host Countries included the following six categories:

- ministry-level institutions, including line ministries and institutions with a mixed mandate;
- sub-ministry level;

- other national institutions reporting directly to the executive branch;
- institutions at the local level;
- consular networks;
- quasi-governmental institutions (e.g., foundations and advisory boards).
- In 2019, A.Gamlen proposed another typology with six types of institutions:
- hybrid ministry (does not engage in diaspora engagement);
- full-fledged ministry (deals with diaspora engagement);
- sub-ministry;
- executive body (this category overlaps with "other national institutions" from the IOM-IPI Handbook);
- quango (here Gamlen includes only semi-private institutions);
- legislative body (this new type of institution partially covers the broad category of quasi-governmental institutions of the IOM-IPI Handbook. According to Gamlen, these institutions belong to the legislative branch of government).

The EUDiF publication "Typology of Institutionalization" distinguishes nine types of institutionalizations based on the previous two:

- ministry;
- a subdivision within a ministry;
- executive body;
- sub-ministry;
- quango;
- public benefit association;
- labor authority;
- advisory body;
- representative body.

Nine types of institutions engage with the diaspora through different entry points and across several sectors.

The sectors of intervention reflect the main types of diaspora contributions to development, namely economic (economic development), social (relationships, networks), human (skills, knowledge, experience) and cultural (culture and education). They also corroborate Gamlen's analysis of the main reasons for establishing diaspora engagement institutions:

- negotiating bilateral labor agreements;
- informing legal migration, protecting diaspora rights and interests;
- promoting the political rights of the diaspora;
- channeling remittances;
- preserving cultural identity;
- supporting networks.

The sectors of interaction between the diaspora and the state are diverse, and this diversity is reflected in the services provided. Consular services for citizens abroad are at the top of the list. It is generally recognized that the provision of effective services in this area is a prerequisite for building trust and mutually beneficial interaction with the diaspora. Therefore, consular services are usually the first step towards diaspora engagement. Although the priority for diaspora engagement is predominantly economic development. In any given country, the diversity of interaction sectors usually grows over time as more services are offered.

CONCLUSION

The adoption of the "Strategy-2030" in terms of expanding interaction with the diaspora is an encouraging step that promotes multifaceted development and mutually beneficial relations between Uzbekistan and its compatriots living abroad. This step can create a favorable environment for

cooperation and mutual understanding in the long term.

The initiatives outlined in the Strategy for Interaction with Compatriots represent a comprehensive and targeted policy that will bring both Uzbekistan and its diaspora into a new era of cooperation.

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

Institutionalize diaspora participation in policy and legislation. In policy making, consider the transnational identity of diaspora members and best practices to optimize the potential of the diaspora, and take into account their needs and opportunities to participate in the development agenda. Create conditions for diaspora members to participate in the development of diaspora engagement policies;

Unify the definition of compatriots in a separate and single law on compatriots and reflect in it the tasks, principles of state policy, as well as economic-social, cultural, linguistic and educational policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in relation to compatriots living abroad;

Establish discussion platforms between states and diaspora members at the local and regional level to discuss the practical realization of the rights and obligations of compatriots.

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