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ANALYSIS OF IMPLEMENTED REFORMS TO IMPROVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract

The state's level of development, economic well-being, security of its citizens and the rule of law depend on its proper governance. How well the public administration organized is based on the effectiveness of local administration, which is its component. This article analyzes the reforms implemented in Uzbekistan in recent years to improve public administration, in particular, local administration, and the work carried out in the legislation in this field.

Keywords Public administration, local administration, local state authorities, local representative bodies, local executive bodies, Councils of People's Deputies.

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the reform process in Uzbekistan, the greatest attention has been paid to the improvement and modernization of state and community administration. Because, if the public and society management is systematically and properly organized, such a state can ensure the safety of its citizens, the rule of law in the state, the criteria of social justice, economic well-being and the development of civil society. In order to improve public administration, first of all, it is necessary to improve local administration and the activities of local administrative bodies. It is a fact proven in the experience of many countries.

Therefore, in the framework of the reforms being implemented in Uzbekistan, the development of local governance, in particular, the issue of improving the activities of local councils, is the

main area of focus in the updated constitution, laws, government decisions, presidential decrees and decisions.

METHODS

The Constitution and laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan, decrees, decisions and speeches of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan as a methodological source were used in the article. Content analysis, as well as the methods of analysis, synthesis, historicity and logic of scientific knowledge were used in the analysis of the reforms implemented in Uzbekistan to improve local governance.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

This article analyzes the organizational and legal basis of the reforms implemented in New Uzbekistan to improve state administration, as well

as local administration.

During the past period, about 300 laws and more than 4,000 decisions of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan aimed at the fundamental reform of all spheres of state and social life were adopted within the framework of the Action Strategy for the five priority directions of the development of our country in 2017-2021. Also, systematic work was carried out to ensure human rights, strengthen the accountability and openness of state bodies, and increase the role of civil society institutions, mass media, and the political activity of population and public associations. [1].

The first priority direction of the action strategy is called "Priority directions for improving the system of state and society construction" and it includes "Strengthening the role of the Oliy Majlis and political parties in deepening democratic reforms and modernization of the country", "Reforming the state management system", "Community tasks such as "improving the management system" were defined and significant work was done in this regard.

On September 8, 2017, in 2017-2021, in order to achieve the goals of the action strategy on the five priority directions of the development of the Republic of Uzbekistan, creating a completely new, effective and high-quality operating system of state administration, the coordination of state administration bodies and local executive authorities, "Concept of Administrative Reforms in the Republic of Uzbekistan" was adopted. In the concept, a number of systemic problems and shortcomings that hinder the successful implementation of the state policy on modernization of economic sectors and social sphere, comprehensive development of regions, improvement of the standard of living and well-being of the population were indicated. The main directions and tasks of administrative reforms to eliminate the specified systemic problems and

fundamentally reform the state administration system were determined [2].

On January 28, 2022, the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan, consisting of 7 priority areas and 100 goals for the period 2022-2026, was adopted based on the principle "From the Actions Strategy to the Development Strategy" as a logical continuation of the ongoing reforms.

In the Action Strategy, the reforms in the field of public administration are mainly aimed at the top management, while in the Development Strategy, the reforms in the field of public administration are mainly aimed at local administration, that is, reforming the activities of local representation and local executive bodies. In the 2nd goal of the Development Strategy, tasks such as turning the Councils of People's Deputies into the main link in solving the existing problems in the regions, and in the 3rd goal, adapting the institutional basis of the activities of local state authorities to the requirements of the times are set [3].

Local state power is a constitutional legal institution. The main reason for this is that Chapter XXI of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan is entitled "Basics of local state power. Self-government bodies of citizens", which defines the organization procedures, powers, status and tasks of local state power bodies. is broken.

As a result of the national referendum on April 30, 2023, in the new version of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the rule that governors head the Councils of People's Deputies was removed, and the introduction of the rule that "the Council of People's Deputies is headed by a chairman elected in accordance with the law from among its deputies" is a bold step towards strengthening democracy [4]. Because the 11th article of our current constitution stipulates that "the system of state power of the Republic of Uzbekistan is based on the principle of division of power into legislative, executive and judicial

power" [5], and these three powers operate independently of each other. The fact that the governor heads the executive power of the respective region and also heads the Councils of People's Deputies, which is the body of representative power in the region, was an inappropriate phenomenon in democracy.

Articles 100 and 101 of the newly revised constitution clearly define the powers of the Councils of People's Deputies and the powers of governors of regions, districts, and cities. First, the powers of the Councils of People's Deputies and governors of regions, districts, and cities were generally interpreted as "Local authorities". Separating and clearly defining the powers of these two bodies was a very important reality in increasing the efficiency of local state bodies.

In this regard, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev expressed the following opinion: "In recent years, we have transferred many powers to the Oliy Majlis, and we are thinking of expanding them further. Deputies are also participating in the appointment of a new minister, getting acquainted with the plans and approving them" [6]. Accordingly, the powers of the Councils of People's Deputies, which are local representative bodies, have been expanded, and the transfer of most of the powers of governors to the Councils is a logical continuation of the reforms.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev issued a decision on the development of local administration "On further improvement of the activities of local executive authorities" from the first days of his election to the presidency. In the decision announced on December 22, 2016, increasing the efficiency of the activities of local executive authorities, further improving and strengthening the organizational structure, ensuring comprehensive development of regions, further stimulating the development of the social sphere, optimal deployment of production forces,

communication with the population, In order to protect their interests, a number of important tasks were defined in order to consistently improve the standard and quality of life based on the study of their needs and requirements, and to effectively organize the implementation of the state policy on youth [7].

However, the activity of local state authorities is still regulated by the law adopted in the early days of independence, which reduces the effectiveness of the reforms.

In his address to the Oliy Majlis dated December 29, 2020, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev stated that "Local authorities and councils are working on the basis of the law adopted 27 years ago, that is, when the institution of the governor was first introduced. Considering that this document does not completely meet the requirements of our current reforms, it is necessary to fundamentally update it" [8]. Although the new version of our constitution has updated the norms of local state authorities and strengthened democratic principles, the activities of local state authorities are still regulated by the Law "On Local State Authority" adopted on September 2, 1993. This does not correspond to the updated constitutional and legal conditions. Therefore, in order to further improve the activities of local government bodies, draft laws "On Local Representative Bodies" [9] and "On Local Executive Power" [10] were developed and submitted to public discussion, but these bills have not yet been discussed in the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis.

The draft law "On Local Representative Bodies" contains some of the most important and noteworthy aspects. For example, they are the following: the limited influence of the governors on the work of the Council, the introduction of the position of the Chairman of the Council and his deputies to lead the Council, the introduction of the

corps of deputies who work on a permanent basis in the local Council, the accountability of the governors to the representative power becoming a reality and, as a result, also at the local level, the principle of separation of powers is that conditions are being created for more efficient operation. In addition, the consideration of the opinions of party groups in nominating the chairman of the Council and their deputies will cause political parties to pay more attention to local elections. Therefore, the draft law will have an important place in improving the activities of the Councils of People's Deputies as a logical continuation of the administrative reforms being carried out in our country.

The draft law "On Local Executive Power" was developed on the basis of democratic principles in accordance with today's requirements. It is particularly noteworthy that the head of the executive power in the draft law and the procedure for appointing him, the candidate of the governor, as the case may be, shall be elected by the political party that won the most seats in the elections to the Councils of People's Deputies, or by several political parties that won the most seats in the same number of seats. the norm on the proposal from among the party members, the possibility of expressing a vote of no confidence in the governors, the establishment of the procedure and evaluation criteria for the effectiveness of the performance of the heads of the executive power, the norm on the public discussion of draft normative legal documents of the local executive authorities, the local state power, the transparency of the activities of the bodies is determined.

The adoption of the newly revised Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan by popular vote in the referendum held on April 30, 2023 served to strengthen the constitutional foundations of the establishment of New Uzbekistan.

At the same time, in the updated constitutional and legal conditions, it is required to improve the main

directions of our country's development and bring the ongoing large-scale reforms to a new stage [11].

Therefore, it is necessary to realize the desire of our people to build a free and prosperous, powerful New Uzbekistan, to create all opportunities for every citizen to develop their potential, to create a healthy, educated and morally mature generation. "Uzbekistan - 2030" strategy of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan was adopted on September 11, 2023 in order to educate, to form a strong economy that has become an important link of global production, to guarantee justice, the rule of law, security and stability.

The "Uzbekistan - 2030" strategy consists of 5 sections and 100 goals that are considered the most relevant for New Uzbekistan. Prior to this, regulatory documents containing the strategic goals of New Uzbekistan, such as "Actions Strategy " and "Development Strategy ", paid special attention to the improvement of local governance. Two goals of the "Uzbekistan - 2030" strategy are dedicated to this issue

In particular, the 75th goal of the "Uzbekistan - 2030" strategy is called "Turning the representative bodies of local state power into a real "voice" of the people." It completely abolished the practice of governors leading the local council, clearly defined the legal status, main tasks and functions of the chairman of the council, as well as the scope of responsibility, created the necessary conditions for public participation in the activities of local councils, widely involved civil society institutions, and gradually expanded their activities, tasks such as digitization, revising more than 300 functions of local councils and canceling the ones that are not unique, systematizing more than 500 legal documents related to the activities of local councils have been set.

The 76th goal of the "Uzbekistan - 2030" strategy is called "Transforming the activities of executive bodies of local state power and establishing

territorial management based on the principle of serving the interests of the population." Based on this goal, it is necessary to determine the clear boundaries of the tasks and functions of the governors at the regional and district (city) levels, to form local executive authorities based on democratic principles, to create the legal basis for their early dismissal, to increase the role of governors in determining the state units and structures of regional executive bodies, formation of the "registry of powers" for the tasks (functions) performed in the regions, optimization of more than 70 overlapping functions of hokimities and departments of ministries, canceling those that are not specific to their activities from among more than 500 tasks assigned to hokimities, Tasks such as the systematization of more than 500 legislative documents related to the activities of the hokimities have been set [12].

The Presidential Decree No. PD-28 "On measures to increase the efficiency of the activities of local state authorities" adopted on February 2, 2024 became an important stage in the development of the activities of representative bodies of local state authorities in Uzbekistan.

In the decree, it was confirmed that tasks and functions can be assigned to local councils only by legal documents, and state authorities and management bodies are not allowed to interfere in the activities of local councils. In addition, in order to increase the role of local Councils in solving important issues in the life of the state and society, systematization of the powers and functions of the Councils of People's Deputies, transfer of a number of powers to local Councils and regulation of the activities of local state authorities based on the principle of "Strong Council, accountable and initiative hokim" and the "road map" on the improvement of legislative documents was approved [13].

In addition, the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the

Republic of Uzbekistan, together with the Cabinet of Ministers, was assigned the task of developing the concept of development of the activities of representative bodies of local state power in Uzbekistan until 2030 by October 1, 2024. In the development of the concept, it is aimed to inculcate advanced democratic principles into the activities of local councils by attracting leading experts from foreign countries, studying international experience, and thereby raising representative democracy in Uzbekistan to a higher level.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, after the reform process began in New Uzbekistan, great attention is being paid to improving the state administration system. If we look at the experience of most developed countries, we can see that the goal of improving public administration was achieved through the development of local administration and the activities of local administration bodies. It should be noted that the improvement of local administration in our country is carried out consistently and systematically. First, the "Actions Strategy" followed by the "Development Strategy" and the "Uzbekistan-2030" strategy, adopted this year, set systematic and clearly planned tasks for improving the activities of local government, executive and representative bodies of local government. The Law "On Local State Power", which was adopted in 1993 and is still in force, does not allow effective implementation of these tasks. The new version of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which was adopted by popular vote in the referendum held on April 30, 2023, and the draft laws "On Local Representative Bodies" and "On Local Executive Power" in the updated constitutional and legal conditions. It will be appropriate to improve it.

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