

**FORMATION AND DYNAMICS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP
BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA AND THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN**

Guljakhon Nozimjonkizi Kobilova

**Lecturer, Department of History of the Eastern Countries and Anthropology,
Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, Uzbekistan**

Email: gobilovaguljahon1994@gmail.ru

Abstract: This article examines the cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Korea in the field of innovative education, situating it within the broader context of Uzbekistan's contemporary foreign policy and ongoing national reforms. The relevance of the study is determined by Uzbekistan's strategic course toward openness, modernization, and integration into the global community, as well as by the significant experience of the Republic of Korea, which occupies a leading position in the development of a high-technology economy and an advanced innovative educational system. Historical and cultural ties, the presence of a Korean diaspora, and the strategic nature of intergovernmental partnership further underscore the necessity of analyzing educational cooperation between the two countries.

The research reveals the historical and institutional foundations of innovative education in the Republic of Korea, analyzes models of educational governance, and identifies contradictions between societal expectations and the practical capacities for implementing modern educational technologies. Special attention is devoted to the dynamics of Uzbek–Korean cooperation: inter-university collaboration, KOICA activities, capacity-building initiatives, and the implementation of projects across preschool, primary, secondary, higher, and continuing education, as well as vocational training and human-resource exchange programs. The study demonstrates that educational cooperation serves as a key instrument of strategic partnership, contributing to the training of highly qualified specialists, the development of human capital, the strengthening of cultural ties, and the resolution of Uzbekistan's socio-economic challenges. The article concludes by emphasizing the significance of Korean experience for the modernization of Uzbekistan's national education system and the necessity of further deepening bilateral collaboration.

Key words: *University, program, project, technology, innovation, government, cooperation, development, KOICA, student, specialist, social, international, foreign, etc.*

Introduction:

The relevance of this study is determined by the fact that Uzbekistan, as a full-fledged subject of international law, pursues an open and well-balanced foreign policy that corresponds to its national interests and contributes to the enhancement of its authority on the global stage. This approach aligns with the fifth priority area of the Strategy of Actions for the Further Development of Uzbekistan for 2017–2021. Within this context, it is essential to analyze the establishment of mutually beneficial cooperation with the Republic of Korea, which ranks 12th globally in terms of development and has accumulated extensive experience not only in the modern modernization of its economy but also across various other sectors.

This close cooperation has effectively served as a testing ground for modern forms of mutually beneficial intergovernmental economic engagement. These bilateral interactions align with contemporary strategic imperatives, as evidenced by the tangible positive outcomes of the ongoing reforms in Uzbekistan, which have facilitated the country's integration into the international community.

Research Methods. The study is grounded in a descriptive research design. In preparing this article, a range of general scientific methods was employed, including the historical and comparative methods, content analysis, observation, synthesis, and others. The methodological framework of the research is based on contemporary educational paradigms and the fundamental principles of higher education pedagogy.

Over the past forty years, South Korea has demonstrated remarkably rapid and sustained economic growth. As a result, the country has transformed from an extremely poor agrarian economy into a dynamic industrial and service-based middle-income economy. This transformation was largely driven by substantial investments in innovative education. In her work, Jisun Lee, a professor at Seoul National University (SNU), identifies the innovative educational technologies employed in South Korea and emphasizes the critical role of the Korean government in their implementation.

In their scholarly work, American educator Yong Zhao and American clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst Kenneth A. Frank examine the factors that shape the use of technologies in schools. They extend existing research on technology integration and the diffusion of innovations within educational settings. Specifically, they employ the metaphor of an ecosystem as a theoretical framework for integrating and systematizing the numerous factors that influence the adoption of computer technologies in schools.

Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences and Professor Nina Mikhailovna Stukalenko, along with other scholars, examines the challenges associated with the active integration and widespread application of innovative technologies in contemporary education. Likewise, Stanford University Professor Larry Cuban, in his article, addresses the issue of integrating innovation into educational practice. He explores the historical interrelations between education and information and communication technologies and derives lessons relevant for the future.

In the course of his analysis, he also seeks to answer the question of why it remains so difficult to achieve a balanced alignment between education and information and communication technologies.

A comparatively divergent perspective is offered by Maciej Grzybowski, a professor at the University of Warsaw, who examines the educational technologies employed in South Korea and underscores the critical role of the Korean government in their implementation. He demonstrates how the use of information and communication technologies in schools transforms traditional, passive modes of learning into more engaging and interactive formats.

Professor of Philology and polyglot scholar at the University of Chicago, Lee Chung Ku, argues that higher education served as a driving force behind Korean modernization. In particular, science and engineering education played a decisive role in Korea's industrialization. In his monograph, he explores the historical, religious, and philosophical factors that have shaped Korean higher education, as well as the distinctive features of contemporary Korean higher education with respect to organizational structure, governance, and institutional culture.

Research Results. Based on the conducted study and an analysis of historical sources and scholarly works, this research elucidates the processes underlying the formation and development of innovative education in the Republic of Korea and synthesizes the principal directions, forms, and dynamics of cooperation between the Republic of Korea and the Republic of Uzbekistan in the practical implementation of innovative educational models. Within the scope of this study, the following objectives have been achieved:

- the historical, legal, and institutional foundations of innovative education have been examined;
- the discrepancy between public expectations regarding the effectiveness of educational technologies and their actual application in teaching and learning has been analyzed;
- the structures and governance models of innovative education in the Republic of Korea have been investigated;

- cooperation between the Republic of Korea and the Republic of Uzbekistan in the field of innovative education has been explored through the analysis of its implementation at specific stages of the educational process—preschool, secondary, and higher education; private education; professional development; and international human-resource exchange.

After South Korea recognized Uzbekistan's independence in 1991, diplomatic relations between the two countries were established within a very short period. Considering their close ties with the United States, most post-Soviet republics approached South Korea with caution. Despite this, Uzbekistan actively pursued political dialogue with Seoul. Over the years, relations between Uzbekistan and South Korea have developed into a broad spectrum of bilateral political and economic cooperation. From 1992 to 2020, Uzbekistan and South Korea maintained a continuous interstate dialogue based on regular high-level meetings, with more than twenty such meetings having been conducted to date.

South Korea and Uzbekistan signed a Declaration on Strategic Partnership in 2006, which they agreed to further develop and deepen in a new joint declaration signed during President Park Geun-hye's visit to Tashkent in 2014. During the visit, President Park emphasized that Uzbekistan had historically been a central hub of the Great Silk Road and today represents South Korea's largest trading partner in Central Asia. When President Islam Karimov visited Seoul in May 2015, sixty agreements were signed, covering trade, investment, economic and technical cooperation, and other sectors, with a total value of USD 7.7 billion. In 2015, the bilateral trade turnover between the two countries exceeded USD 1.7 billion, accounting for 50% of South Korea's trade with the Central Asian republics. South Korea actively participated in the implementation of numerous projects and programs across various regions of Uzbekistan, including the Navoi and Angren free industrial and economic zones, as well as in the development of the intercontinental logistics center at Navoi Airport.

Динамично развиваются отношения также в сфере образования. Университеты Узбекистана сотрудничают более чем с тридцати научно-исследовательскими учреждениями Южной Кореи. Во многих учебных заведениях открыты центры корейского языка и культуры. В 2014 году в Ташкенте открылся Университет Инха, который поднял сотрудничество в этом направлении на новый уровень. Это первое зарубежное учебное заведение, которое готовит высококвалифицированных IT-специалистов на международном уровне. На сегодняшний день в университете обучаются более тысячи студентов по направлениям информационных технологий, инженерии и логистики.

It should be noted that over the past two decades, the two republics have established a robust partnership encompassing political, economic, cultural, and educational dimensions. Close cooperation between Uzbekistan and the Republic of Korea, as well as between South Korea and the broader Central Asian region, is of critical importance for economic and technological modernization and regional interaction. This chapter examines the educational cooperation between the two countries and its impact on Uzbek society.

In South Korea, a dual system of early childhood education exists, wherein child care is divided between kindergartens for children aged 3 to 5 and child care centers for children from infancy to 5 years old. National kindergartens and child care centers are governed by distinct legislation and pursue different overarching educational objectives. Kindergartens are regulated under the Preschool Education Act and are ultimately accountable to the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology. Child care centers, on the other hand, operate in accordance with the Child Care Act and are accountable to the Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Family Affairs.

The national curriculum of South Korean child care centers encompasses six learning domains: life skills, physical movement, social relationships, communication, exploration of nature, and appreciation of the arts. The objectives of these centers are to provide high-quality child care services that support children's holistic development, to offer support that enables both women and men to participate in the workforce, and to consolidate oversight and regulatory mechanisms for the management of child care institutions, thereby enhancing professionalism in early childhood care.

The enrollment rate for five-year-old children is approximately 50% for kindergartens and around 35% for child care centers. Both systems can be either public or private. In South Korea, private kindergartens (78%) and private child care centers (56%) predominate in both forms of day care provision. While kindergartens primarily operate on a half-day basis, child care centers offer full-day care. All kindergarten teachers possess a minimum of a three-year higher education degree in early childhood education. The qualification system for child care teachers differs somewhat, with multiple pathways available to achieve certification.

The Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Family Affairs oversees three types of child care teacher qualification systems, all of which require at minimum a high school diploma plus a one-year training program for child care instructors.

South Korea is characterized by a gradual weakening of state regulatory control. Today, decentralization, deregulation, and privatization constitute key priorities of the national

government. These strategic objectives are driving profound social transformations and necessitate new approaches to early childhood education. The sector has expanded primarily due to the growing demand for an accessible and predominantly female flexible labor force, which, in turn, requires the provision of safe childcare facilities. Traditionally, childrearing was regarded as the exclusive responsibility of the family, and state involvement in this area remained minimal.

At present, approximately 40% of childcare costs are covered by the government, while the remaining 60% is borne by parents. Current debates in South Korean childcare policy focus on whether public support remains insufficient and whether the provision of childcare should continue to be regarded primarily as a parental responsibility delivered through private actors.

It is perhaps unsurprising that the private childcare sector in Korea is predominantly profit-oriented. As of 2010, only 5% of childcare institutions in South Korea were publicly operated, while 49% were private; an additional 7% were provided by employers or parental cooperatives, and the remaining 37% were operated by families.

Within the broader context of Korean – Uzbek relations, the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) plays a particularly significant role. Established in 1991, KOICA is a governmental agency mandated to provide grant-based assistance to developing countries with the objective of reducing poverty and fostering socio-economic development. A central component of its mission is the cultivation of cooperative relations with developing nations. KOICA delivers support through multiple mechanisms, including concessional loans, grants, resource provision, and educational initiatives. The agency operates under the authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea.

The representative office of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) in Uzbekistan was established in 1995. Since then, KOICA has implemented a wide range of projects aimed at transferring advanced expertise and modern technologies. With the direct support of the agency, more than 1,300 specialists from various regions and the capital of Uzbekistan have completed professional training programs in the Republic of Korea, gaining invaluable experience in the management of economic and technological processes from their Korean counterparts.

According to Lee Kyung Sang, Director of the KOICA Office in Uzbekistan, “The KOICA Office at the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Uzbekistan is the institution responsible for administering grant-based assistance to support the socio-economic development of the Republic of Uzbekistan.” At present, the KOICA Office in Uzbekistan

provides grant assistance in more than ten sectors, including education, medicine and public health, information and communication technologies, agriculture, and others. Through these initiatives, KOICA contributes to strengthening the institutional capacity of the country. Furthermore, the agency's volunteer programs facilitate people-to-people exchange between the two nations, fostering the transfer of Korean development expertise.

KOICA's contribution to the development of Uzbek–Korean relations has been substantial and highly effective. Between 1995 and 2018, the total volume of grant assistance provided to the Republic of Uzbekistan through KOICA amounted to USD 94.32 million. These funds were allocated to the implementation of 29 projects in areas such as healthcare, education, information technology, and other key sectors.

Within the framework of its cooperation with the Republic of Uzbekistan, KOICA's headquarters in the Republic of Korea has announced plans to establish an Early Childhood Education Center in Tashkent, with implementation scheduled for 2021–2026. According to preliminary estimates, the project's cost will amount to USD 11 million. This initiative was discussed during a series of meetings held between 27 November and 5 December 2019 by representatives of Uzbekistan's Ministry of Preschool Education and KOICA. The Center is expected to work closely with preschool educators and methodologists. The Korean program envisions not only activities for children but also engagement with parents. In addition to training sessions and professional development courses, the Center will focus on the development of teaching aids and educational materials.

As noted by Uzbekistan's Minister of Preschool Education, Agrippina Shin, "The preschool education system is in need of substantial transformation. We all aspire to ensure that our children are surrounded by highly qualified specialists capable of finding an individual approach to every child and fostering the realization of their potential. Today, approximately 90,000 teachers are employed in the preschool education sector. However, only a small number of highly competent teachers and methodologists are available on the labor market, despite the thousands of educators trained in the country. The retraining and professional development center, constructed and equipped with Korean technologies and supported by Korean experts, will enable Uzbekistan to make a qualitative leap in personnel preparation. Specialists working in preschool education will acquire advanced, high-quality knowledge, elevating the level of their pedagogical practice. The establishment of such a center by our partner, KOICA, constitutes an important and highly appreciated contribution."

As part of the project, a Center for Testing and Research will also be established, where children and parents will be able to acquire essential knowledge and skills. The prototype for this institution is the Early Childhood Development Center in Seoul. The building will be structured into five developmental zones:

- a Health Zone designed for physical activities;
- a Social and Emotional Zone aimed at fostering emotional intelligence;
- a Communication Zone for interactive play and interpersonal engagement;
- a Cognitive Zone dedicated to games with mathematical and logical components;
- an Architecture Zone intended to support motor skills development and creative thinking.

The delegation of the Ministry of Preschool Education also expressed interest in participating in professional exchange programs, volunteer initiatives, and in organizing training courses and workshops in the Republic of Korea for preschool education specialists.

It should be noted that, owing to KOICA's financial and technical support, significant transformations are underway in Uzbekistan, particularly in the sphere of preschool education. These include the introduction of innovative, advanced pedagogical and information-communication technologies, as well as the adoption of fundamentally new approaches to the training, retraining, professional development, selection, and capacity-building of personnel within the preschool education system.

Another important area of cooperation in the development of preschool education in Uzbekistan was discussed during the meeting between the Minister of Preschool Education, Agrippina Shin, and the President of the Korean company Woojintuplan Co. Ltd., Kim Jin-woon.

The company Woojintuplan Co. Ltd. operates its own media center, which develops and produces audio- and video-based educational materials, including media programs for children aged 4 to 7 in subjects such as English and mathematics, as well as content on prominent historical figures, stories, and other educational resources. Following the meetings, both parties reaffirmed their interest in cooperation, and Woojintuplan Co. Ltd. expressed its willingness to assist in establishing a media center under the Ministry of Preschool Education of Uzbekistan, with the aim of developing audio and video materials for preschool-aged children.

During the discussions, the parties also reviewed the key directions for the development of Uzbekistan's preschool education system and the ongoing reforms in this sector initiated under the leadership of the President of Uzbekistan. Additionally, they addressed future

prospects for bilateral cooperation in the field of preschool education development in Uzbekistan.

Following the attainment of independence and the implementation of a national language policy, the study of English as a second language gained significant popularity. Proficiency in English was also instrumental in facilitating access to higher education abroad. Consequently, several international universities established campuses in Uzbekistan, including the Westminster International University in Tashkent (opened in 2002), the Singapore Institute of Management, Tashkent (2007), the Polytechnic University of Turin, Tashkent (2009), and Inha University, Tashkent (2014). More recently, Webster University inaugurated its Tashkent campus (2019). Uzbekistan also hosts branches of Russian higher education institutions, such as Lomonosov Moscow State University (2006, Tashkent), Gubkin Russian State University of Oil and Gas (2007, Tashkent), and Plekhanov Russian University of Economics (2001, Tashkent).

Cultural interaction between Koreans and Uzbeks first emerged in the late 1930s, following the deportation of Koreans residing in the Russian Far East to Central Asia. During the dissolution of the Soviet Union, some Koreans were born and raised in Uzbekistan, where they continued to reside after the country achieved independence. Despite their relatively small numbers, the Korean diaspora has been actively engaged in small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly in urban areas. Members of the Korean community also occupy middle- and senior-level administrative positions within both national and local governmental institutions. Furthermore, following the collapse of the USSR, ethnic Koreans in Uzbekistan established centers for Korean culture across the country. They have also developed cultural and business ties with organizations representing the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Immediately after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, high-level cooperation was initiated between the governments of Uzbekistan and Korea. The Korean government also gradually cultivated direct relations with the Uzbek population. Education emerged as one of the most significant domains of bilateral interaction.

Korea actively leverages the educational channel to establish deep strategic relations with Uzbekistan. To examine the nuances of Korea–Uzbekistan relations, various aspects of higher education are considered. According to statistical data from the Ministry of Justice of Korea, the number of Uzbek students in Korea has been steadily increasing, with more than 2,300 Uzbek students currently pursuing higher education in the country. In addition to the growing number of international students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs, the

number of students attending language courses has also risen. The Korean government anticipates that by 2023, approximately 200,000 international students will be studying in Korea.

As of August 2017, more than 95,000 international students holding D-2 visas were enrolled in higher education institutions, while over 42,000 students held D-4 visas, the majority of whom were engaged in foreign language studies. Although students enrolled in language programs do not formally enter degree-granting institutions, they should be considered potential future international students, as they are likely to continue their studies in Korea. Changes and reforms in university regulations are being planned to increase the number of international students in the country. These measures are expected to facilitate graduates' transition into the workforce. Furthermore, the reforms are anticipated to simplify the promotion and expansion of academic programs by universities and enhance student recruitment through various scholarship and support initiatives.

Many Uzbek students continue to benefit from various scholarships available to them in Korea. Among these are several government-sponsored programs, including the Korea Government Scholarship Program (KGSP), which provides full coverage of tuition fees, living expenses, and other costs. Partial and full tuition waivers are also available, and certain living expenses may be covered. In addition to these state-funded scholarship programs, universities offer institutional scholarships that may exempt students from tuition fees, either partially or fully, depending on the student's grade point average.

According to official sources, Korea is particularly interested in developing markets. By attracting a greater number of international students, it aims to bridge cultural gaps and overcome language barriers in entering these markets. This strategy also facilitates the employment of foreign graduates within Korean companies domestically as well as in their overseas branches. The support provided by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) extends to developing countries through various channels, including loans, grants, resources, and education.

In this context, the KOICA CIAT scholarship program is particularly relevant. The program offers students tuition waivers during their studies in Korea, in addition to coverage of living and transportation expenses. Eligibility for this scholarship requires candidates to be "government officials, public sector employees, or researchers in governmental institutions, working in their home country with a bachelor's degree or higher."

Through the KOICA scholarship program, Korea typically targets individuals already employed within government institutions. Recipients of the scholarship are expected to continue working in their respective departments and agencies in Korea upon completion of their studies. Accordingly, the program is designed to enhance the capacities of civil servants by providing them with international education and additional professional experience.

As of 2014, 1,400 specialists from various ministries and agencies in Uzbekistan had undergone training in South Korea through KOICA programs, and by 2016, this number had risen to 1,800. On average, no fewer than 100 Uzbek specialists representing different ministries and agencies participate annually in internships in South Korea. Furthermore, KOICA has planned the construction of a digital library for Uzbekistan, which will consolidate 220 libraries into a unified system.

In 2014, Inha University established its branch in Tashkent, which has continued to develop and expand. By September 2016, the campus had a total of 694 students and three faculties. The university aims to cultivate human capital and produce highly qualified professionals in the fields of technology, industry, and business. Inha University represents a collaborative initiative involving the Government of Uzbekistan, various national companies, and Inha University in Korea. Students benefit from grants provided by the founding companies, which operate in the telecommunications, transportation, energy, mining, chemical, and financial sectors. Grant recipients are required to work for the sponsoring organization for a period of five years.

Inha University is expected to train personnel for Korean companies operating not only in Uzbekistan but also throughout Central Asia. Uzbek students graduating from the university will acquire qualifications enabling them to work with domestic organizations in technology, industry, and business, as well as with Korean companies located in Uzbekistan and other Central Asian countries.

It should also be noted that, in the field of educational cooperation, one of the major developments in 2018 was the signing of trilateral agreements between Puchon University, the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education, and the Ministry of Preschool Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan regarding the establishment of a Puchon University branch in Tashkent.

Puchon University is recognized as one of the prestigious universities in South Korea. Currently, the university comprises 26 faculties and offers a wide range of academic programs in engineering, natural sciences, humanities, and the arts at the bachelor's, master's, and

doctoral levels, as well as preparatory courses. The university also includes a Faculty of Preschool Education and a dedicated Korean Language Center for international students. The institution is semi-private and semi-public, with its founding entities consisting of the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education, the Ministry of Preschool Education of Uzbekistan, and Puchon University (Republic of Korea).

The primary objectives of the university are defined as follows:

- to train highly qualified specialists in the fields of preschool education, architecture, and design, as well as in other in-demand areas of education, in accordance with the country's socio-economic development prospects and the objectives outlined in the "Action Strategy for Five Priority Areas of Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017–2021" (new specialties may be introduced from the 2019/2020 academic year based on sectoral economic needs);
- to integrate advanced international experience into the system of preschool education, architecture, design, and other in-demand educational fields by organizing the teaching and learning process based on contemporary educational technologies and promoting the development of an open information and educational environment;
- to conduct research activities in preschool education, architecture, design, and other in-demand educational areas, taking into account existing challenges and labor market demands;
- to contribute to the development of preschool education, architecture, design, and other in-demand educational fields in the Republic, and to foster close collaboration between research and educational institutions, as well as other enterprises and organizations.

Within the framework of the "Republic of Korea – Republic of Uzbekistan Partnership Strategy for 2016 – 2020," Korea has actively supported Uzbekistan in enhancing and developing human resources to ensure national competitiveness. Vocational training centers have been established in Tashkent and Samarkand, with three additional centers opened in Shakhrisabz, Urgench, and the Fergana Valley. These centers offer six-month retraining programs in professions and specialties that are in high demand in the labor market. This initiative, implemented by KOICA, is known as the World Friends Korea (WFK) program.

The establishment of vocational training centers forms part of Uzbekistan's strategy to achieve upper-middle-income status by 2030. The Uzbek government seeks to address unemployment and respond to the demand for skilled and retrained workers for both current and future state projects. Korea contributes to the creation and operation of these educational

centers, thereby generating employment opportunities while simultaneously preparing a qualified workforce for Korean enterprises and joint projects with the Uzbek government and local companies.

Korean government initiatives in the field of education impact not only the Uzbek public but also foster interaction between South Koreans and Uzbeks. World Friends Korea (WFK), a provider of overseas volunteer services, offers eight distinct volunteer programs through which South Korean volunteers are dispatched to countries in need of assistance. According to statistics provided by WFK, as of October 2017, 561 Korean citizens participated in programs specifically designed for Uzbekistan. Among them, 374 volunteers contributed to the education sector, 38 to healthcare, 14 to agriculture and fisheries, 20 to public administration, and 15 to industrial energy. Beyond improving living conditions and accelerating development in the beneficiary countries, WFK's programs also function as a mechanism for cultural exchange, promoting mutual understanding between the nations involved.

It is evident that Korea engages with Uzbekistan across various levels of the education sector. This approach represents a "win-win" scenario for the governments of both Korea and Uzbekistan, as well as for the Uzbek public. Currently, South Korea is actively involved in the development of Uzbekistan's energy sector, particularly in gas production: Uzbekneftegaz, in collaboration with Kogas, constructed the Ustyurt Gas Chemical Complex.

Additionally, Uzbekistan plans to build a large-scale 4-gigawatt solar power plant, scheduled for completion by 2030, with Korea agreeing to invest USD 300 million in the Samarkand solar energy project. Korea is also contributing to the development of the automotive and textile industries in Uzbekistan. Moreover, it has played an active role in the renovation and modernization of Uzbekistan's infrastructure, including the construction and reconstruction of roads, airport renovation, and the modernization of the energy and manufacturing sectors.

Cooperation has also extended to other sectors requiring highly skilled personnel, such as e-government and telecommunications. As strategic partners, Uzbekistan and Korea have participated in the establishment of over 400 joint ventures and numerous multimillion-dollar joint investment projects across various fields and industries. Such partnerships and deep strategic engagement would be unattainable without collaboration in the field of education, which serves several key functions through educational channels:

1) Companies require highly qualified specialists in various fields to initiate and implement these investment projects. The Korean government has helped meet this demand

through various scholarship programs and the establishment of higher education institutions. These measures have prepared a new generation of professionals for projects not only in Uzbekistan but also throughout the rest of Central Asia.

2) Korea contributes to building its own image as a friendly and strategic partner of Uzbekistan. This is facilitated through engagement with the Uzbek public, the creation of employment opportunities, and the provision of educational prospects. Uzbekistan currently faces a pressing need for access to employment and education for its population.

3) Through sustained and intensive cooperation between governments and various organizations, Korean culture and language have been disseminated and popularized. This, in turn, has fostered mutual understanding between representatives of Uzbek and Korean cultures.

4) By training Uzbek specialists employed across various government ministries and agencies, Korea has provided the Uzbek government with personnel qualified to support projects initiated by Korea.

5) Long-term and mutually beneficial partnerships at the governmental level, combined with sustained engagement between Korea and the Uzbek public, have fostered a favorable perception of Korea. This, in turn, serves as a foundation for future projects.

It should be emphasized that the Korean government employs a mixed approach in selecting target audiences for its public diplomacy initiatives.

On one hand, Korea places strong emphasis on young, talented individuals possessing technical and administrative skills. The Korean government primarily favors candidates interested in working with Korean enterprises and joint Uzbek–Korean ventures. Furthermore, this selectivity extends to civil servants currently employed in designated leadership positions.

On the other hand, Korea adopts a more broad-based approach in its engagement with the Uzbek public, supporting language and cultural centers as well as establishing vocational training centers. This mixed approach helps create favorable conditions for bilateral interaction. Furthermore, in the context of Korea's use of education as a tool for social development in its relations with Uzbekistan, education serves as a powerful incentive, as it can provide employment opportunities and even help individuals realize their aspirations. An educated workforce also contributes significantly to the country's overall development.

On its path toward a new phase of development, Uzbekistan, a country with a rich history and culture, collaborates with a reliable partner in South Korea. Over the course of 30 years of diplomatic relations, significant achievements have been realized across a wide range of sectors. It is particularly important to emphasize that the objective of cooperation in the field

of education lies in contributing to the development of Uzbek society by strengthening the system of technical and vocational education and by cultivating highly qualified specialists who meet the demands of the new information and knowledge era.

South Korea—traditionally known as the “Land of Morning Calm”—has, through education, transformed itself from a low-income country into a prominent actor in the global economy. Despite several national crises, the country has demonstrated remarkable growth since gaining independence in 1945. Underpinning Korea’s success are the population’s strong commitment to education and substantial state investment in human capital development.

Many cultural and traditional characteristics of Uzbekistan and South Korea exhibit notable similarities. For Uzbekistan, cooperation with South Korea is of strategic importance not only in the field of education but also across a wide range of other sectors. Moreover, Uzbekistan has a strong interest in further expanding international partnerships and fostering friendly relations in economic, social, and other domains.

To replicate South Korea’s success and to unlock the full economic and intellectual potential of our nation, it is essential to ensure effective governance in the implementation of international projects, as well as to create favorable conditions for the expansion of South Korean business activities aimed at strengthening humanitarian and trade ties. Ultimately, the realization of these objectives depends on our collective efforts and the commitment of our government.

Conclusion. From the foregoing analysis, several key conclusions may be drawn. First, the South Korean experience clearly demonstrates that education – and, more broadly, the accumulation of human capital – is of paramount importance for rapid economic development. The accelerated formation of human capital constitutes a necessary precondition for achieving both rapid and sustainable economic growth.

Second, because the type of human capital required for economic development evolves over time, it is essential that the education system remain capable of responding to this shifting demand. Summarizing the critical turning points in the Korean case, it becomes evident that the initial need was for a moderately educated workforce – one capable of basic literacy and sufficiently disciplined to perform tasks reliably. The education system met this demand through the establishment of universal primary schooling.

As the industrial structure advanced and required a more educated and moderately skilled labor force, the education system was likewise prepared to respond, having already expanded into broad-based secondary education and vocational training programs. Ultimately,

when the labor market began to demand highly educated individuals and a skilled workforce suited for employment in high-technology industries, the education system addressed these needs through the rapid expansion of higher education – while maintaining its overall quality.

Third, it is important to note that the private sector finances more than half of education expenditures. Such a mechanism for the distribution of costs, as it appears, has not allowed the education system to fall too far behind.

South Korea is one of Uzbekistan's most important partners. Over the past thirty years, a solid political and economic partnership has been established between the two republics, and a regulatory framework has been developed for bilateral and multilateral cooperation. South Korea has a strong positive image in Central Asia and, together with Russia, China, the United States, Japan, and the EU, is one of the largest investors in Uzbekistan. The Republic of Korea – Central Asia and Central Asia Plus Japan formats represent new models of regional and interregional cooperation. However, it is important that Uzbek – Korean bilateral and Central Asian – Korean multilateral agreements be actively implemented and that the scope of cooperation among the participating countries be expanded. Strong cooperation between Uzbekistan and South Korea is of vital importance for the region's economic and technological modernization and connectivity and could contribute to closer trade relations, economic development, and investment ties.

In conclusion, it should be noted that over the 30 years of cooperation with South Korea, Uzbekistan has achieved significant progress in a wide range of areas. The objective of collaboration in the field of education is the development of Uzbek society through the strengthening of the technical and vocational education system and the training of highly qualified specialists capable of meeting the demands of the new information and knowledge era.

Our peoples share similarities in terms of culture and traditions. For Uzbekistan, cooperation with South Korea is of paramount importance, both in the field of education and in other sectors. Moreover, Uzbekistan is highly interested in the further expansion of international partnerships and friendships in economic, social, and other spheres. To fully realize the broad economic and intellectual potential of our people, it is essential to ensure effective management in the implementation of international projects, including those aimed at introducing new innovative technologies into the educational system.

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