

**EAM's Speech at the inauguration of the IT Room of
the India- Uzbekistan Entrepreneurship Development
Centre, Tashkent on 15 July 2021 at 1415 hrs**

Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Mr. Adkham Ikramov,

Officials of the esteemed Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan,

Distinguished guests, and all online participants who have joined from Andijon and Khashkadarya regions,

It is a great pleasure to be amongst you today for the inauguration of the IT Room and connecting with the regional centres of the India- Uzbekistan Entrepreneurship Development Centre in Andijon and Khashkadarya regions. I am also delighted to visit the Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Uzbekistan as it has played an important role in the growing trade and economic partnership between India and Uzbekistan.

India and Uzbekistan are civilisational neighbours. Historically we have shared trade, commerce, cultural, philosophical and linguistic exchanges which are still reflected in our value systems. These ancient bonds have strengthened and translated into a strategic partnership today with frequent high-level exchanges between both sides. Even in times of pandemic, these high level

interactions continued with the Virtual Summit held between both our leaders – Prime Minister Modi and H.E Mr Shavkat Mirziyoyev, in December 2020.

Today there is a growing business confidence between India and Uzbekistan. Indian investors are increasingly investing in Uzbekistan in various sectors including pharmaceuticals and healthcare, education, hospitality, construction, agriculture and agro-processing, textiles, chemicals etc. At the regional level, cooperation between Andijon and Gujarat has resulted into several business to business (B2B) plans of cooperation. Both our countries are also working to promote a similar model of regional cooperation between Haryana and Fergana.

Friends,

Development cooperation has emerged as one of the strong pillars of the strategic partnership between India and Uzbekistan. The India-Uzbekistan Entrepreneurship Development Centre was established in Tashkent in 2018 with the grant assistance of Government of India and technical support of the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, Ahmedabad. The Resident Director of the Centre has also been sent here by that Institute. If you remember, the Government of Uzbekistan had declared 2018 to be the year of entrepreneurship and by

establishing this Centre, India became part of your national efforts for growth and development.

This IT room has been established today as part of the continued assistance from Government of India. The latest IT equipments would enable the Centre hold classes, laboratories, incubation and virtual links with the regional centers of entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan. Entrepreneurship Centre provides the necessary skills to the talented Uzbek youth in setting up their own businesses, bringing to fruition smart business ideas, creating the ecosystem of innovation, financing and development of marketing network so that these ideas become sustainable on commercial basis.

I am happy to know that the India-Uzbekistan Entrepreneurship Development Center is running a variety of courses for the young entrepreneurs of Uzbekistan, several of them being women. President of Uzbekistan His Excellency Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev has also declared 2021 to be the Year of Youth in Uzbekistan and the Entrepreneurship Development Centre is successfully contributing in this direction too. Youth skilling, employment and business generation is an important outcome of the work of this Centre. I am confident that this IT Room will further help in this process.

India is a reliable development partner of Uzbekistan. India has extended a soft line of credit of 1 billion USD to Uzbekistan. Four projects worth 448 million USD in the areas of installing computer equipment to create smart classrooms in universities in Uzbekistan, road construction and sewerage system have already been identified under this soft financing. Both countries have also signed an MoU for implementation of High Impact Community Development Project through Indian grant assistance. Various projects are being processed to be taken up under this MoU.

Before the pandemic, every year, more than 170 Uzbek officials were undergoing training under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme in India as part of our commitment for training and capacity development. More than 2400 Uzbek officials have benefitted from ITEC programme since 1993 in various spheres including banking, finance, project development, management, English language training, space technology, computer science, healthcare, Yoga and many more. Every year, 25 scholarships are offered to Uzbek students for education in India at bachelors, Masters and Ph.D. level. So far, more than 1000 Uzbek students have benefitted from these scholarships. I am happy to note that many Uzbek students are pursuing higher education under this scholarship in niche institutions like IIT Bombay, IIT Roorkee in India. ITEC programme courses are also being

run online with the participation of candidates from Uzbekistan.

An Indian IT expert from the Software Technology Parks of India is resident in Uzbekistan and has helped in setting up of IT Parks in Uzbekistan- the first one was inaugurated in July 2019 in Tashkent followed by one in Jizzakh and other regions of Uzbekistan. An Indian Yoga teacher has recently joined the 'Yoga Federation of Uzbekistan' to teach and promote yoga in Uzbekistan. The range of India's capacity building activities has been expanding in Uzbekistan.

India's development cooperation extends to all Central Asian countries now in addition to a number of other countries in the world. During the 2nd India- Central Asia Dialogue held in November 2020, India has offered 1 billion USD line of credit to the Central Asian states for implementation of socio-economic development projects.

Friends,

Once again, I congratulate the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan on the successful establishment of the IT room and connecting the IUEDC with regional centres like Andijon and Khashkadarya. I thank you all for

joining me. I am confident that the activities of the India-Uzbekistan Entrepreneurship Development Center will keep expanding and bringing benefits to thousands and thousands of youth in Uzbekistan.

Thank you very much. Rahmat.
