

Country: Uzbekistan

IPU geopolitical group: Eurasia Group

The Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan (Parliament)

Focus area: Bicameral parliamentary commissions on SDGs can foster, through oversight and whole-of-government engagement, targeted policy reforms and regular reviews in support of the SDGs

Key highlights:

- Aligning national legislation with the SDGs can enhance their implementation and bring about broader societal system changes.

Summary

The Bicameral Parliamentary Commission on monitoring the implementation of national priorities and the SDGs (SDG Commission) was established in February 2020. It is chaired by the Head of the Senate and comprises members of the Senate and the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis. The SDG Commission is mandated to mainstream the SDGs across the core functions of Parliament with focus on strengthening parliament's role in monitoring and overseeing government policies and actions in SDG implementation. The SDG Commission's particular priority is to ensure accountability for the efficient and effective delivery of sectoral reforms in line with the country's commitments to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda).

The SDG Commission communicates regularly with other parliamentary commissions to facilitate the coordination and alignment of various legislative initiatives with nationalized SDG targets and to elaborate reform packages to accelerate the implementation of these targets. The SDG Commission also collaborates with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to strengthen the Commission's capacities and expertise to conduct routine oversight activities and ensure the alignment of legislation with the nationalized SDG priorities. Additionally, the SDG Commission works to enhance parliamentary means for public engagement and inclusion, and to promote policy coherence through hearings and expert discussions with key national entities and inquiries. This work includes coordinating with the government by holding quarterly hearings on the progress in major socioeconomic and healthcare reforms, and the development of special parliamentary monitoring tools.

The SDG Commission actively cooperates with the SDG Coordination Council, which is headed by the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Economy, in coordinating the work of different state agencies, ministries and departments, and fostering a "whole-of-government" and cross-sectoral approach for SDG integration in national plans and strategies. The SDG Commission hears and reviews on a quarterly basis the progress reports prepared by the government on SDG implementation.

The SDG Commission, which was established at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, also put emphasis on the importance of leveraging plans for joint resource mobilization, digitalization and risk assessments in regard to SDG implementation. Furthermore, it recommended to the government to

reflect on the challenges posed by the pandemic in the government's development planning and review processes to guarantee sustainable progress towards the achievement of the nationalized SDG targets.

Special events are regularly organized on critical cross-cutting issues and specific themes aimed at awareness raising, gathering of feedback, inputs and supplementary information, and mobilizing and coordinating the efforts of different stakeholders. Such events included a multi-stakeholder conference on the theme "New Uzbekistan's National SDGs: Milestones and Perspectives", the SDG week on the "Leave No One Behind" principle, round tables on the SDGs and the COVID-19 pandemic, the "International Forum on Inter-Parliamentary Global Cooperation in the Implementation of the SDGs" among others.

Results and impact

Among other core functions of the SDG Commission is the harmonization of laws and legislative acts with the SDGs. To this end, the SDG Commission engages in consultative and expert meetings with other thematic parliamentary commissions and the Council of the Legislative Body. In parallel, SDG Commission members engage with civil society representatives, academics, technical experts and others with specialized knowledge to share data and information and discuss their views and concerns regarding the implementation of the relevant laws and legislative acts. The SDG Commission supports continuous capacity building, awareness raising and training of members of parliament (MPs) and parliamentary staff to ensure the gradual incorporation of the SDGs in the corresponding national targets, as well as to better "equip" MPs for their participation in the formulation of the national and subnational development plans and their accountability frameworks.

During the preparation of the first Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2020, the SDG Commission actively engaged in the assessment process to identify the critical gaps and challenges that stood in the way of further progress on the SDGs in Uzbekistan. It examined the country's progress against the nationalized SDG targets by: studying the interim progress reports prepared by the Inter-Ministerial Coordination Council on SDGs; meeting with different stakeholders and constituencies to discuss misleading information and review supplementary and non-official data; analyzing the legislative framework in terms of an enabling environment; and encouraging the deeper involvement of citizens at regional and community levels. The conclusions of this process were formulated as recommendations to Parliament as a whole and to the government for future improvements of relevant legislation, and socioeconomic policies and programmes in the country.

Challenges

The development and adaptation of a national SDG indicator and accountability framework that, on one side, are harmonized with the global indicator framework, and on the other, reflect specific contextual factors and the country's realities pose important challenges for both government officials and MPs. The situation is particularly problematic when it comes to the methodological development and metadata identification of the national SDG indicators due to various capacity gaps, technical issues, and human and financial constraints in the relevant government ministries and agencies, as well as due to the limited capabilities of MPs to assist the government in addressing the information gaps and the complexity of the data adaptation process.

Sources and links

The Bicameral Parliamentary Commission on monitoring the implementation of national priorities and the SDGs (in Russian): <https://lex.uz/docs/4773639>

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