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A New Stage of Civil Society Institutions Development in Uzbekistan under Globalization Conditions

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Abstract: *This article discusses the recent organizational, institutional, and financial support for civil society institutions (CSIs) in Uzbekistan as a result of democratic changes in the country, their role in state and social governance, and their international cooperation.*

Keywords: *Civil society institutions, subsidy, grant, openness, transparency, accountability, non-governmental non-profit organizations, trade unions, mass media, religious and educational structures, women's and youth associations.*

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The political and democratic reforms being implemented in New Uzbekistan have produced significant results in ensuring transparency in state and social governance, strengthening public control over executive authorities, and protecting human rights and freedoms. These processes have attracted the attention of the international community.

Undoubtedly, the participation and role of civil society institutions in these changes are of great importance. Civil society is a system of various institutions independent from state structures that represent the interests of society. It includes non-governmental non-profit organizations, trade unions, mass media, religious and educational organizations, women's and youth associations, as well as citizens' self-governing bodies. They serve to expand citizen participation in state affairs, ensure justice, and strengthen state accountability before society.

Democracy is not limited to holding elections or the presence of a multiparty system. Its foundation is human dignity, the rule of law, and principles of fair governance. In recent years, Uzbekistan has taken consistent steps to reform the constitution, renew the judicial and legal systems, make election processes transparent, and ensure transparency in state administration.

Today, civil society institutions not only shape public opinion but also perform functions such as monitoring state bodies, protecting citizens' rights and interests, and actively participating in socio-economic reforms. They are actively involved in observing and analyzing elections and conducting educational activities. Furthermore, NGOs are strengthening their role through public councils under parliamentary committees, providing proposals on draft laws.

Civil society institutions consolidate public trust by organizing public hearings, monitoring, and surveys over the activities of ministries and local authorities. Non-governmental organizations implement effective projects to protect the rights of people with disabilities, low-income families, children, and women.

Mass media, as an important component of civil society, plays a significant role in ensuring freedom of speech and transparency. Investigative journalism, analytical articles, and open discussions enhance control over government activities and broaden the right to information.

In recent years, civil society institutions have conducted extensive advocacy to improve legal literacy and form an active civic position among the population. Joint projects based on social partnership between the state and public organizations are being implemented in areas such as education, healthcare, and environmental protection.

According to the Ministry of Justice, there are currently 9,232 non-governmental non-profit organizations operating in Uzbekistan, a fivefold increase compared to the year 2000. For example, in Surkhandarya region, 599 NGOs operate effectively in various fields including entrepreneurship, sports, ecology, education, legal reforms, healthcare, gender equality, and national cultural centers.

Since independence, a strong legal framework regulating the activities of civil society institutions has been established in Uzbekistan. The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, laws on Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations, Public Associations, and Social Partnership clearly define their legal status and directions of activity. Presidential decrees and Cabinet of Ministers' resolutions have improved the mechanisms for state support of NGOs.

For instance, the Presidential Decree on "Approval of the Concept for the Development of Civil Society for 2021–2025" established a system for granting state subsidies, grants, and encouraging NGO participation in socially significant projects.

Moreover, NGOs increase their capacity through cooperation with international organizations, attracting foreign grants and experts. Between 2022 and 2024, six local NGOs and ten international organizations in Surkhandarya implemented joint projects aimed at involving youth and women in entrepreneurship, vocational training, ensuring gender equality, combating human trafficking, and expanding social protection services.

In conclusion, the importance of civil society institutions in building a democratic society is immeasurable. They serve as a bridge between the state and society, strengthening standards of justice and transparency. Democratic changes are implemented not only top-down but also through active citizen participation and public oversight. Therefore, supporting civil society institutions is of strategic importance for the future of the country.

In the context of globalization, civil society is not only a field for criticism but also a force driving constructive initiatives and practical reforms. The success of democratic changes in Uzbekistan largely depends on the development and active participation of these institutions.

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