

***Building Forward Better:  
A COVID-19 Green Recovery for Uzbekistan***

**International Online Forum in Uzbekistan**

**Tashkent, 3-4 March 2021**

***The final document of the Forum and  
the proposals for the next steps***

International Online Forum on “***Building Forward Better: A COVID-19 Green Recovery for Uzbekistan***” took place on 3 and 4 March 2021. The Forum was organized by the United Nations Development Programme, the European Union, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan represented by the Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction, the Center of Hydrometeorological Services under the Cabinet of Ministers, and the State Committee for Ecology and Environment Protection, with the participation of representatives of civil society, academia and international organizations.

The forum was focused on discussions on how to contextualize the importance of a global movement “*building forward better*” for Uzbekistan’s green recovery. The forum gave a platform to initiate a dialogue among all interested parties and discuss how strategies in the field of sustainable energy and agriculture, climate change adaptation and mitigation, digitalization and other relevant areas will help create an economy and society, which are based on justice and sustainability principles, and are climate-smart, resilient to existing and future shocks (e.g. public health crisis, climate change). The Forum concluded with a formulation of a set of recommendations and practical actions in compliance with the “*building forward better*” principles. These priority actions aim at supporting the Government of Uzbekistan in the process of transition to a green and inclusive economy during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on the Forum’s discussions, the participants agreed on a number of conclusions concerning Uzbekistan’s green recovery.

- Cooperation and interagency coordination are critical factors to achieving strategic priorities benefiting the green recovery in Uzbekistan and Central Asia and tackling national and regional environmental and economic challenges.
- The whole-of-government approach is a prerequisite to ensure that the principles of “*building forward better*” and “*do no harm*” to the environment and society are streamlined across all national and regional policies.
- Green economy also requires an inclusive bottom-up approach. Civil society, research institutions, MSMEs and the youth should all be given the opportunity to be the agents of change. They could contribute towards innovation, behavioral change and transformative impact for more resilient and climate-neutral society and growth.

- More efforts should be made towards coordinated actions by both national and international organizations in promoting green recovery in Uzbekistan and applying the international experience tailored to the needs and context of the country.

For practical implementation of joint conclusions and recommendations of the Forum, the participants recommend to the Government of Uzbekistan the following actions:

- It is proposed to entrust additional functions to the Interagency Council on promoting and implementing of a “green economy” in Uzbekistan, which include:
  - Support to relevant decision-making processes that advance green economy development in Uzbekistan;
  - Create a united platform for discussing the strategies and policies concerning renewable energy, energy efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, carbon-neutral private sector development, sustainable agri-food sector, digitalization and other related issues benefiting a green recovery and transition to a green economy without doing a harm to environment and society;
  - Enhance the capacity of national stakeholders in implementation of the best practices, development of new and innovative environmentally-friendly and inclusive solutions, environmental assessments and data analysis, as well as in raising awareness on the importance of economic development that does no harm to the environment;
  - Support to the participation of Uzbekistan in regional cooperation mechanisms and knowledge exchange on issues concerning the sustainable development through offline and online means.
- The proposed actions of the Policy Brief on a “Green Recovery and the Transition to a Green Economy in Uzbekistan” presented at the Forum could be recommended for use to prioritize development of key sectors of the economy such as energy, construction, water, agriculture, green financing sectors having strategic importance in promoting of a green development in the country;
- Representatives of civil society, academic institutions, and private sector could participate in the Council’s meetings and activities to ensure a wide and inclusive participation of all stakeholders during the planning, implementation and evaluation of plans within all sectors of the economy;
- The representatives of international and bilateral organizations that are ready to provide assistance in promoting practical solutions in green economic development and recovery could be engaged and consulted by the Council, when it is deemed necessary.

The national and international partners represented at the Forum are ready to provide the necessary assistance to the extent possible to the Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction in formulation of relevant follow up actions and plans on operationalization of the strategy for transition of Uzbekistan to a green economy.