

**Address of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon
to Majlisi Oli (Parliament) of Tajikistan (April 15, 2009)**

Dear fellow-countrymen, Esteemed members of Majlisi Milli and deputies of Majlisi Namoyandagon, Esteemed audience,

This year the President's Address to the supreme legislative body is submitted under the circumstances when the whole world is embraced with financial and economic crisis which has its negative impact on all the countries of the planet, including Tajikistan.

In this connection, it should be first of all noted that in the years preceding the beginning of the world economy's crisis period Tajikistan had entered the stage of sustainable economic development and made considerable successes in raising standards and quality of its people's life.

Thus, in spite of abnormally protracted winter frosts, lack of water and drought, acute deficit of electricity and increase in fuel and food prices, last year economic indices of the country preserved positive trends. Gross domestic product increased by 8 percent as compared with 2008, while its increase over the past five years made 46 percent.

In 2008 per capita GDP increased by 35 percent in comparison with 2007, while capital funding rose by 77 percent and the volume of foreign investments increased by 15 percent. Inflation rate fell 1.7 times, making 11.8 percent.

Besides, annual income of populace increased by 34 percent, average wage per employee - by 28 percent, average pension almost doubled, while wages of those employed in healthcare system rose by 60 percent, salaries of scientific, cultural and social protection institutions increased by 50 percent, wages of employees in education system and other budget-funded branches rose by 40 percent, and salaries of law-enforcement bodies and military structures personnel were nearly doubled. In the course of the year 104 thousand and over the past five years more than 510 thousand new jobs were established.

Such a stable socio-economic development of the country over that period was based on implementing the tasks set up in the past year's Address.

In the process of their implementation, a series of concrete measures was undertaken which helped ensure macro-economic stability, social protection of population, development of priority branches, assistance to real sector and entrepreneurship, as well as create a proper and favorable investments climate.

To secure the development of various branches of economy and social sphere of the country, more than 5 billion somonis were spent last year on the account of the state budget, which is 1 billion 600 million somonis, or 47 percent, more as compared with 2007. We know well our reserves and opportunities, and are fully aware of which work should be done and which obstacles should be removed to reach the goals set by us.

In this connection, in this year's Address I would like to analyze and review the present state of the country's economy, the possible ways of minimizing the negative impact of global financial and economic crisis and working out necessary and timely measures for maintaining sustainable socio-economic development of the country.

Signs of the impact of the financial crisis on our economy were already felt in as early as the last quarter of the past year.

Drop of rates of the global economic development and reduction of the demand for our exported production (particularly, cotton and aluminum) led to fall of their prices by 30 to 50 percent and decrease in foreign currency revenues of the country.

Yet, the signs of the financial crisis' effect on our economy were most notably felt in the first quarter of the current year. One of them was failure to secure planned revenues of the state budget, which occurred for the first time in the past eight years.

Although the GDP growth exceeded 3.5 percent in the first quarter of 2009, nonetheless, preliminary analyses show that this year the real growth of gross domestic product will be somewhat lower than our forecast indices.

Since the very first days that we began to feel the effects of the crisis on our economy, the Government of Tajikistan has undertaken some urgent measures and is now systematically working on the effective solution of emerging problems.

The Government's anti-crisis commission worked out a plan of immediate measures and proceeded to its practical implementation. According to the plan, this year more than 280m somonis will be attracted in the form of grants from international financial organizations for maintaining our state budget's stability. Talks are under way concerning the attraction of other additional means.

Besides, 300m somonis will be attracted on the account of the International Monetary Fund for maintaining our balance of payment and rendering assistance to our country's monetary system.

To accelerate economic reforms and secure sustainable socio-economic development of the country, the Government and National Bank of Tajikistan must enliven their cooperation with international financial organizations, including International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and other international financial institutes.

At the same time, considering the continuation of the financial crisis and its turning into an all-embracing economic crisis, the Government of Tajikistan, basing on existing opportunities and reserves, should work out a plan of additional mid-term anti-crisis measures and fulfill the following tasks:

- securing macro-economic sustainability, which implies undertaking necessary measures in the sphere of monetary-and-crediting and taxation-and-budgetary politics;
- developing real sectors of economy, including small and medium businesses;
- providing favorable conditions for the maximum possible attraction of investments;
- establishment of new jobs, support for labour market and attraction of as many as possible jobless to it;
- strict implementation of the measures aimed at the social support of population in the conditions of the economic crisis.

Considering the present state of our economy, heads of ministries and agencies, particularly Ministry of Finance, Taxation Committee and Customs Service, as well as executive bodies of state power in regions, towns and districts are instructed to undertake urgent measures for implementing the state budget and securing revenues from all kinds of taxes and obligatory payments. At the same time, they should review and analyze the existing taxation privileges and submit substantiated conclusions on their effectiveness to the Government.

The present situation urges the Government of the country to discuss the question of re-assessing material and financial resources and their directing to top-priority branches. It should submit to Majlisi Namoyandagon its proposals concerning the introduction of relevant amendments into the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On the State Budget for the year of 2009".

I stress that the commitments of the State in what regards social protection of population, payment of salaries, raising of wages in the systems of education, healthcare and social sphere, payment of pensions, stipends, indemnities and other social cash benefits will be executed in full, irrespective of the present state of affairs.

In what regards effective and purposeful spending of budgetary means and securing rigorous financial discipline, the Ministry of Finance, together with other ministries and agencies, as well as local executive bodies of state power and budget-funded organizations, should determine real expenditures of republican and local budgets and take control of the use of budgetary means.

Along with this, heads of all state governance bodies and other budget-funded organizations and institutions are instructed to undertake necessary measures for preventing wasteful expenditures on economic needs, repairs, purchase of equipment and transportation means, busy trips, increase of staff and other expenses, unnecessary under the current circumstances.

Our financial politics are in need of really serious reforming, which should be carried out within the framework of a special program. Basing on the program we should secure reforming financial governance of the state, transparency, effectiveness and rigorous control of the execution of the state budget's revenues and expenditures, optimal process of forming up the budget and taxation reform. In this connection, we should stir up the implementation of the Comprehensive Strategy of the State Financial Governance.

Over the past years, the Government of the country has undertaken a series of measures aimed at stimulating the real sector of economy.

For example, income tax and social tax were abated from 25 percent to 25 percent, while cotton-fiber sales tax was lowered from 25 percent to 10 percent. Construction of energy facilities and deep cotton-fiber processing enterprises, as well as the import of advanced manufacturing technologies, equipment and agricultural machinery, and cotton-growing sector were freed from taxation and customs duties, while the taxation of natural persons' incomes was reduced from 25 percent to 13 percent.

Various privileges were granted with the aim of attracting investments and developing small and medium businesses, while in the agricultural branch the single taxation of dehqani and farmer households was introduced. At the same time, the cotton-growing sector was freed from the necessity of taking all kinds of licenses.

All this notwithstanding, solving the questions of raising the efficacy of production, social protection of population and establishment of new jobs depends on fruitful performance of the real sector of economy and the development of small and medium entrepreneurship which are in need of state support.

To protect our economy from the impact of the financial and economic crisis, create a favorable climate and stimulate domestic and foreign investors, as well as to diversify the export of goods, it would be expedient to grant additional tax privileges to domestic manufacturers and subjects of small and medium entrepreneurship.

In this connection, the Government of Tajikistan is instructed to work out and submit relevant normative and legal documents concerning the reduction of value-added tax from 20 percent to 18 percent and profit tax - from 25 percent to 15 percent, as well the removal of other obstacles in the field of taxation. As regards the tax-payers operating according to the simplified system of taxation, the maximum rate of their total incomes should be raised from 600 thousand to 800 thousand somonis.

Considering the significant role of the banking system, we should further support it through economic mechanisms.

To conduct an effective monetary-and-crediting politics and secure the development of the banking system, we need the improvement of normative and legal documents related to strengthening the control of crediting organizations' activities in the field of governing assets and commitments, ensuring their paying capacity and lowering banking risks, since all these measures pursue the sustainability of the country's banking system.

With the aim of securing the development of small and medium entrepreneurship, increase in manufacturing domestic production, raising the exports potential of the country and establishment of more new jobs, the National Bank and commercial banks this year should increase the volumes and quantities of credits.

Over the past two years the total sum of credits given has risen from 2b 300m

somonis to 4b 800m somonis, while the quantity of borrowers has increased from 180 thousand to 400 thousand.

The quantity of credits given by banks for the purpose of developing small and medium businesses past year grew by 62 percent, the first quarter of this year showing the tendency of its further rising.

Just one of these days, during my meeting with chief executives of the National Bank and commercial banks of the country, the bankers declared that, the impact of the global financial crisis notwithstanding, they would increase the volume of crediting by 25 percent as compared with the past year. Of course, this step deserves every support.

One another problem is related to interest rates of credits given. While nowadays the annual inflation rate equals to 10 percent, the average annual interest rate makes 23 percent, which is a much too high rate.

Commercial banks and non-banking crediting organizations are advised to revise interest rates depending on the reduction of inflation rate and to more actively direct their means at hand towards supporting the real sector of economy, particularly productive entrepreneurship. At the same time, it would be expedient to simplify the process of crediting and relevant documentation.

With the aim of further supporting the banking system, the National Bank is instructed to reduce the interest rate for credits given to commercial banks from 12 percent to 10 percent and the norm of obligatory reserves from 10 percent to 8 percent. Necessary measures should be also taken to secure the payment capacity of banks.

At the same, we should secure constant control of the financial state of commercial banks and taking relevant measures in necessary cases.

Commercial banks should pay serious attention to attracting capitals, raising the volumes of crediting, particularly with the aim of developing the productive entrepreneurship, and ensuring the return of credits given.

In the process of strengthening the economic potential of the country, the importance of perfecting the investments politics and further attracting investments is constantly growing. Within the framework of implementing joint investing projects, at present 60 investment projects are being implemented in the country, their total cost making 6b 400m somonis.

State investment projects and direct investments are first of all aimed at the complete satisfaction of the country's demand for electric energy and the development of infrastructure.

In this connection, I deem it necessary to determine how citizens, as well as domestic enterprises and organizations could take part in the construction of hydropower stations and infrastructural facilities, taking into consideration their stimulation to such activities.

The Government should work out concrete measures aimed at forming up international rating of Tajikistan and favorable climate for investments.

At the same time, considering significant inflow of foreign capital to the national economy, the Government and Parliament should make concrete steps towards joining respective international documents on the protection of investors' rights.

Following the proposal of the Presidential Consultative Council for the improvement of investments climate, the Government of Tajikistan approved and submitted to Majlisi Namoyandagon proposals on amending the laws of the Republic of Tajikistan 'On joint-stock companies', 'On insolvency (bankruptcy)' and 'On state registration of juridical persons and individual entrepreneurs'.

It is worthy to not that the adoption of the three laws will positively affect the growth of Tajikistan's international prestige due to the development of

entrepreneurial activities and help further attract foreign investments and stimulate population to entrepreneurship.

Therefore we call on you, people's deputies, to take measures for adopting these normative and legal acts as soon as possible.

At the same time, relevant governmental structures should secure a transparent system of managing state property, make an inventory of state assets and create a respective data bank.

The support of small and medium entrepreneurship is one of the main directions of our state's economic policy. For the support and further development of small and medium entrepreneurship, cut out baseless check-ups and create favorable conditions for the attraction of investments, a Presidential Decree was signed which declared, beginning with July, 2008, a two-year moratorium for all kinds of examinations of the subjects of small and medium entrepreneurship.

At the same time, the Agency for state financial control and combating corruption was given instruction to refrain during the current year from examining financial activities of private sector.

Yet, we should bear in mind that this support must not be seen as just privileges, stimulation and material assistance. All this is necessary in many cases, but the most important lies in liquidating artificial obstacles and corruption as soon as possible.

First of all, we should solve the questions of simplifying procedures connected with the beginning and conducting of entrepreneurial and commercial activities.

Therefore, an important task is to simplify administrative rules related to the subjects of entrepreneurship. In this field we must change both legislative grounds and functionaries' thinking.

We must realize that the development of small and medium entrepreneurship means increase of jobs and is an effective way of solving many social problems.

Analyses show that the system of licensing in our country is still much too intricate.

The 'single-window' principle in the communication with entrepreneurs must become a reality, and we must create such conditions wherein any entrepreneur and citizen could in shortest possible term register documents related to entrepreneurial or commercial activity, and proceed to work.

To further simplify the rules of state registration of economic subjects, a new registration principle should be introduced, namely, the principle of notification. Such a practice will raise the level of mutual confidence between state structures and entrepreneurs.

Time has come to adopt a respective law that will put in order the rules of taking all kinds of licenses. Only those licenses will be left which are directed towards ensuring the security of citizens' lives and health, as well as economic security of the country.

The Government, with the participation of wide circle of representatives of private sector, non-governmental organizations and the Public Council, should in the shortest term possible work out a special program of improving entrepreneurial environment and secure its practical implementation.

Esteemed audience,

The global financial and economic crisis urges us to modernize and restructure the real economy of the country.

In this, we should not set hopes only upon the omnipotence of market. The Government must pay more attention to the state of the real economy and actively start its diversification.

In the first quarter of the current year the volume of industrial production dropped by 8.2 percent as compared with the same period of 2008.

One of the main causes of this drop was the electric energy shortage, because industry, as a most power-consuming branch, had to operate in the conditions of strict power economy.

Over that period, the volumes of production fell in light, chemical and food industries, non-ferrous metallurgy and industry of construction materials. Besides, about 12 percent of enterprises stood idle in the past year.

Although in the process of reforming the industry over the past years various programs aimed at the development of separate branches (i. e. programs of extraction and processing of precious stones and metals, development of light industry, deep processing of primary aluminum, cotton-fiber and another agricultural production etc.) were adopted and despite the fact that past year 140 industrial enterprises were put into operation with the establishment of 3,700 new jobs, still, the said programs have not been implemented properly so far.

Considering such a situation, the Ministry of Energy and Industry, and local executive bodies of state power should undertake urgent measures to eliminate existing shortcomings and solve the above-mentioned problems.

At present, with the aim of developing mining and light industries, deep processing of primary aluminum, cotton-fiber and another agricultural production, as well increasing output of exported goods, several enterprises are in the process of construction.

In the first quarter of the current year, more than 90 new enterprises have been put into operation. At present, 14 thousand people may be provided with jobs at these enterprises.

Over the past five years, more than 7b somonis have been spent from all sources of state funding on the development of strategic branches of the country's economy, including energy, transport, communications, agriculture and ensuring food security.

In the three years to come their funding will be increased by 50 percent, reaching the sum of more than 10b somonis.

Maintaining the economic development on stable level and ensuring the implementation of various programs in socio-economic branches, provisioned in the National Strategy of Development for the period through 2015, depend on the solution of energy problems. In this field, the following tasks must be accomplished:

first, the construction of low, medium and high capacity hydropower stations and energy transmission lines, as well as the creation of the Unified Power Grid of the country;

second, repair and modernization of hydropower facilities and restoration of their capacity, reconstruction of power and gas transmitting networks, transition to energy-saving technologies and ensuring the steady development of energy sector;

third, mobilizing all reserves and possibilities, as well as attracting domestic and foreign investments to satisfy in the three years to come the country's demand for domestic natural gas and in the future four years, its demand for electric power, which will mean Tajikistan gaining its energy independence.

At present, the Government of Tajikistan conducts necessary work for restoring existing energy capacities and constructing new facilities of the sector, as well as for attracting investments to the implementation of energy projects.

The construction of the Rogun and Sangtuda-2 hydropower stations is now in full swing, while the Sangtuda-1 HPS will be finally put into operation in May this year. It is slated that the construction of the Sangtuda-2 hydropower station will be finished in 2011.

Over the past years 150 low capacity power stations were put into operation throughout the country, which helped improve energy supply of distant mountainous regions.

In accordance with the State Program for the Construction of Low Capacity Power Stations, 15 such power stations were put into operation in the first quarter of the current year, while the construction of other 26 low capacity power stations is underway. In other words, in all 50 low capacity power stations will be put into operation by the end of the year.

At present, on the account of allocating 460m somonis, the modernization of the Nurek HPS, which has been operating for 36 years without any repair, is being carried out. The works will last for the five years to come.

It is worthy to note that the reconstruction and full modernization of the Nurek and Kayrakkum hydropower stations, as well as the Yavan heat-and-power plant will make it possible for the country to obtain more than 400 megawatt of electric power additionally.

At present, the preparatory work has started for the modernization of the cascade of hydropower stations in the Vakhsh River. Once it is completed, the productive capacity of the said power stations will increase by 70 megawatt.

At the same time, the Ministry of Energy and Industry, and the 'Barki Tojik' Company, together with domestic and foreign companies, should study the question of the construction of 'Nurabad-1', 'Nurabad-2', 'Sanabad', 'Fandarya' and 'Shurab' hydropower stations, as well as another heat-and-power plant in the city of Dushanbe, and go on with the preparation of their technical and economic substantiation.

In the process of forming up the unified power grid of the country, in 2008 the 220 kV power transmission line 'Lolazor - Khatlon' was fully put into operation, while the construction of the 500 kV power transmission line 'South - North' will be completed a year and a half ahead of the appointed time, namely, by the end of this year.

Touching upon the prospects of the development of gas extraction branch and its reserve, I should note that at present, in cooperation with 15 domestic and foreign companies, geologic survey is being conducted on 87 gas and oil fields.

In 2008, two cities, Kurgan-Tyube and Sarband, as well as three districts of Khatlon Region were provided with domestic gas. At the same time, geological prospecting is underway on gas fields in the vicinity of Dushanbe and in Khatlon Region.

To satisfy the country's demand for gas and improve the state of gas-transmitting networks, the relevant structures, in cooperation with domestic and foreign investors, must take measures for restoring and putting into operation the existing gas wells, as well conducting geologic prospecting on other fields. Another important way of ensuring energy independence is the wide use of non-traditional and renewable energy sources.

I had already expressed my opinion concerning the issue in the past year's Address, and today I reiterate that to secure the effective operation of all the branches of the national economy and satisfy consumers' demand for electricity and heat, the Ministry of Energy and Industry, and State Committee for Investments and Management of State Property, in cooperation with other relevant ministries and agencies, must take concrete measures aimed at the wide use of various energy sources, including gas and renewable sources.

Under the circumstances of the global financial crisis, the rational and thrifty consumption of energy resources, first of all, electricity, gas and water, is of paramount importance.

So we should, by all possible ways, put an end to wasteful consumption and losses of electricity, natural gas, heat and water.

We must pay serious attention to the culture of consumption and economy of electric power, gas and water. In developed countries, the 'energy culture' is taught in schools.

Another example: in the United States and the countries of the European Union, through the adoption of special laws, the ban is being introduced stage by stage on the sales of the lamps that consume too much electricity.

The use of modern energy efficient lamps reduces the electricity consumption five-fold and at the same time increases their performance term by eight to ten times.

Most of you might remember the energy crisis of the 70s of the past century in the US, EU, Canada and Japan. Then, thanks to the explanatory work with population, those countries managed to reduce the energy consumption by 4 to 14 percent in short time.

Energy shortage in our country makes annually 4.5b kWh, and one of the main ways to prevent it is the wide introduction of energy-saving equipment.

In what regards the thrifty energy consumption, I would like to draw your and the Tajik people's attention to the results that could be achieved by implementing just one measure - the substitution of present incandescent light bulbs with energy efficient lamps.

At present, the quantity of household energy consumers exceeds 1 million families. Analyses show that if every household uses on average 8 incandescent bulbs with total capacity of 800 W for 12 hours per day, then annual electricity consumption of population makes 3b 620m kWh.

In case energy-saving lamps be used, the annual energy consumption of population would make 506m kWh.

In other words, the substitution of incandescent bulbs with energy efficient lamps will make it possible, just on the account of population, to save 3b 120m kWh, which is equal to the output of an 810 megawatt hydropower station.

At the same time, it should be noted that there are 241 thousand low-income families in the country, which receive compensations for consumer services on the account of the state budget.

If every low-income family gets 8 energy efficient lamps, the total expenses will make 25m somonis. The energy consumption of incandescent bulbs makes 845m kWh, while the transition to the use of energy-saving lamps will reduce to 101m kWh, the difference equaling to 744m kWh.

Thanks to this, low-income families will be able to save 44,5m somonis annually.

To solve the above-mentioned problems, the following tasks must be accomplished:

1. The Cabinet, ministries and agencies, other organizations and institutions, irrespective of their form of property, must fully complete the transition to the use of energy efficient lamps by the end of 2009.

2. Executive bodies of state power of regions, towns and districts must conduct explanatory work among population and ensure the transition of organizations, institutions and commercial enterprises to the use of energy-saving lamps by the end of this year.

3. Ministries of finance, energy and industry, labor and social protection of population, as well as the "Barki Tojik" Company must take measures for providing low-income groups of population with energy efficient lamps by the end of the current year.

4. The relevant ministries and agencies must study the question on the gradual ban on importing incandescent bulbs and submit concrete proposals to the Government.

5. Considering the vital importance of the question, a competent governmental commission must be established consisting of experts from the relevant ministries and agencies.

6. Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Ministry of Energy and Industry, and State Committee for Investments and Management of State Property must ensure the construction and putting into operation, in 2009-2010, of two plants for manufacturing energy efficient lamps.

As everybody knows, another strategic goal of our state is the final salvation of the country from communicational isolation. It is quite natural, because the development of communicational infrastructure is a main factor of economic progress.

Over the past years, the Government of Tajikistan, on the account of significant budgetary means and foreign investments, made a considerable work in this direction. Up to the present time, 1,200 kilometers of motorways, 14 kilometers of tunnels, 93 bridges and 5 kilometers of anti-landslide facilities have been constructed or rehabilitated.

In the field of the construction and modernization of motorways, tunnels and bridges, several investment projects are being implemented, their total cost being 2b 20m somonis. In the process of their implementation, this year, ahead of the appointed time, the reconstruction of the 350-kilometer motorway Dushanbe - Chanak has been completed, while the reconstruction of the 400-kilometer highway Dushanbe - Kyrgyzstan border - Saritash is in full swing.

Besides, preparatory work is underway for the implementation of 5 other projects related to the reconstruction of 380 kilometers of motorways.

In all, in the three years to come the road construction will be funded with 2b somonis, so by the moment of celebrating the 20th anniversary of the state independence our country will finally put an end to its communicational isolation.

The present state of the global economy urges us to effectively use modern mechanisms of raising level and quality of service in the branches of transport and communication. In doing this, we must give a new impetus to the development of air transport.

In the process of reforming this branch, past year its structure was reorganized. We should bring the infrastructure of airports and the branch as a whole to conformity with the needs of the national economy and international standards.

At the same time, we should increase the number of routes of domestic and foreign airlines, and create proper conditions for raising level and quality of service, ensuring security and reducing the costs of services.

To bring the Dushanbe airport to conformity with modern norms, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, and the State Unitarian Enterprise 'Dushanbe International Airport' must ensure putting its new terminal, costing 140m somonis, into operation by September, 2011.

The level of service in railway transport must also conform to modern requirements, which implies the necessity of raising the quality of goods and passenger transportations and introducing of realistic freight charges.

In this connection, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, and the State Unitarian Enterprise 'Railways of Tajikistan' must work out and implement the plan of the modernization of the branch. They should also stir up the process of improving its material and technical base and the construction of the 46-kilometer railway Dushanbe - Kurgan-Tyube.

Esteemed audience,

Another important branch of the national economy is agricultural sector, on whose development the food security of the country mainly depends. In the past year, the total volume of agricultural production increased by 8 percent as compared with 2007.

At the same time, some production indices, degree of ensuring food security and rate of establishing new jobs cannot be called satisfactory yet, while the question of the effective use of water and land needs a more serious approach.

The level of the domestic consumer market's dependency on the imports of main foodstuffs is still high. To ensure food security, we must increase the production of main foodstuffs, while to satisfy demand for victuals, we should improve the material and technical base of agricultural households.

Over the past five years, 2b somonis were spent from all sources of state funding with the aim of successful implementation of agricultural development programs, restoration of infrastructure and irrigation networks, management of water resources, purchase of agricultural machinery, seeds and mineral fertilizers.

This year, as well, more than 700m somonis will be spent on these goals on the account of the state budget and foreign investments.

In the past five years, the country exported one million tons of fresh and dried fruits, as well as vegetables, to the tune of 800m somonis. Yet, it is very small a result, if we consider our existing possibilities. The exporting potential of the country is not used fully yet.

Therefore, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Academy of Agricultural Sciences and heads of local executive bodies of state power must take concrete measures to ensure the wide use of high-yielding varieties of cereals, vegetables and potato, and the development of horticulture and viticulture with the aim of satisfying the requirements of domestic market and raising the exporting potential of the country.

One of important steps in this direction is the establishment of centers for leasing agricultural machinery in all districts of the Republic.

At the same time, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and the State Committee for Investments and Management of State Property, must seriously study the question of increasing the manufacture of export-oriented agricultural products and work out the relevant program.

Although our farmers made significant successes in several directions, the production of one of our main crops, namely, cotton is decreasing from year to year.

The main causes of drop in the cotton-growing sector's indices are inconsistency between the order of its funding and modern requirements, falling concernment of cotton-growers in final results, low quality of seeds, poor fertility of soil, worsening of their state and falling out of irrigation networks.

In 2008, 140m somonis were spent from the state budget on the support of agricultural sector, which money was through domestic banks given to dehqani households in the form of credits. This year, too, the state budget will allocate 180m somonis for giving privileged credits to agriculturists for the term up to a year and a half.

The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the Ministry of Agriculture and other relevant ministries and agencies must the ways of solving the problem of cotton-growers' debts and their further supporting.

At the same time, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Academy of Agricultural Sciences, in cooperation with other ministries and agencies, and executive bodies of state power of regions, towns and districts, should take measures aimed at raising the yield of cotton and securing the profitability of the branch. Besides, heads of executive bodies of state power of regions, towns and districts must refrain from interference with the activities of dehqani households and provide them with agricultural machinery, seeds and mineral fertilizers.

Ministries of Agriculture and Education, as well as executive bodies of state power of regions, towns and districts are instructed to categorically refrain from drawing schoolchildren and students to field works, particularly, cotton harvesting.

One of the ways to provide the rural population with jobs and thus lower the

level of unemployment is the reclamation of fallow and new lands. At present, 57 thousand hectares are not used in agricultural production.

If we draw four persons to till every hectare of these lands, 250 thousand rural inhabitants will be provided with jobs. Besides, if we get 20 metric centers of harvest from each hectare, the agricultural production in the country as a whole will increase by 100 thousand tons. In the reclamation of new lands, along with the means from the state budget, the means of local budgets, as well domestic and foreign investments should be widely used.

We must also establish the market of land certificates and organize its effective functioning, as well as stir up the process of introducing market relations, effective use of water and land, and broaden secondary sowing. Ministries of Agriculture, and Land Reclamation and Water Resources, Agency for Land Survey, Geodesy and Cartography, Academy of Agricultural Sciences, together with the relevant ministries and agencies, and executive bodies of state power in regions, towns and districts, must take decisive steps towards improving the legislative base of the new stage in the reforming of agricultural sector, introducing new lands into agricultural circulation and conducting secondary sowing on no less than 200 thousand hectares annually.

We should bear in mind that this is one of the ways of ensuring the food security of the country.

At the same time, it should be stressed that the stability of agricultural production depends on rational and effective use of the country's water resources. In present conditions, when we feel water shortage, consequences of drought and the impact of climatic changes on Central Asia's main source of water - the glaciers of Badakhshan, we should study new principles of managing water resources on the basis of the mechanisms of basin and integral regulation, and discuss the possibility of their introduction.

Esteemed deputies,

The possibilities of the state in the implementation of social policies are gradually broadening thanks to sustainable economic development of the country. Over several past years we managed, due to using existing reserves, to solve a series of social problems and reduce the poverty level by 30 percent.

In the past five years, 4b 900m somonis have been spent on the needs of social sphere. This figure is one of significant results of our state's social policies during that period.

Today, although due to the global economic crisis the possibilities of the state remain limited, we pay special attention to the creation of necessary conditions for the development of the most important spheres of public life - science, education, culture, healthcare and social protection of population. I reiterate once again that, all the difficulties notwithstanding, we give priority to these branches.

The total sum of expenses on social branches and pension security in the budget for the current year is equal to 2b 600m somonis, which makes 44 percent of the whole budget. This exceeds by 1b 300m somonis, or 56 percent, the analogous index of 2008.

Within the framework of the anticipated sums, on July 1 this year the wages of employees in healthcare system and institutions of social protection of population will be increased by 30 percent, and on September 1, the salaries of employees of scientific and educational institutions will be raised by 15 percent.

The restructuring and development of economy are impossible without the development of science and education, without rendering support to them.

Pivotal for the state policies in the sphere of education are the questions of

introducing world standards into the system of education and upbringing of specialists who would meet the requirements of labor market. It is quite natural, since the development of any state depends, first of all, on fruitful activities of highly-skilled professionals in various branches of economy.

Since our gaining independence, much has been done in the sphere of constructing new schools and rehabilitating the existing educational institutions. Thanks to this, 854 schools were constructed or repaired.

At present, 145 lyceums and schools for gifted children are functioning in the country, the number of their pupils equaling to 67 thousand. Of this quantity, 25 schools are private or non-state-run. The number of vocational schools increased from 13 to 28, and that of students, from 70 thousand to 160 thousand.

In compliance with the State Program of Computerizing General Education Institutions, more than 3100 schools obtained 25 thousand computers, which made it possible for 675 thousand schoolchildren to study computer technologies. Within the framework of the said Program, the computerization of educational institutions of Mountainous Badakhshan Autonomous Region, districts of the Rasht Valley, several towns and districts of Sughd and Khatlon Regions, as well as the city of Dushanbe has been already completed.

At the same time, the Ministry of Education must stir up studying modern technologies in general education institutions and accelerate the process of joining the global educational environment.

To ensure teaching and upbringing educated and professionally skilled generation and to make our educational system closer to world standards, the Government is gradually implementing its reforming.

To reach this end, past year the State Program of construction, rehabilitation and reconstruction of schools for 2008-2015 was adopted, which will be funded with 590m somonis. According to the Program, more than 800 schools will be constructed, repaired or rehabilitated by 2015.

With the aim of preparing highly skilled cadres abroad, the international stipend of the President of Tajikistan was established.

In all, 1b 140m somonis will be spent on the system of education in 2009, which is four times as much compared to the preceding five years and 33 times as much compared with 1995.

Unfortunately, the level and quality of teaching and upbringing high skilled cadres in the country cannot be called satisfactory yet. So, the necessity has arisen of introducing changes into the system of education.

In this connection, I propose to transfer the schools of basic education to the system of compulsory 10-year education starting from September, 2010, and carry out the transition of general education schools to a new educational system in September, 2014. This step will lay the ground for our entering the world educational environment.

The Ministry of Education is instructed to pay serious attention to the content of textbooks and manuals, the quality of teaching at all stages of the educational system, the preparation of high-skilled cadres inside the country and abroad, as well as ensure the improvement of qualification of the educational system's employees.

As you all know, nowadays the development of technical sciences and introduction of modern technologies are of paramount importance. Yet, in our country exact sciences are as if overshadowed by the humanities. That is why our technical and technological thinking is on a relatively low level.

It is obvious that the high level of humanitarian thinking that helps lead people along the road of self-cognizance, patriotism and pride for the state, is also important.

Yet, basing solely on humanitarian thinking, we will not manage to master modern sciences and technologies.

At present, various investment projects are in the process of implementation in the country, their total cost being 6.4b somonis, yet, due to the lack of specialists of economic, engineering and technical professions, 80 percent of them are implemented by foreign companies.

Therefore, the top-priority task for the Ministry of Education and the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan consists in that, concurrently with developing the humanities, they direct their forces and possibilities towards developing technical and exact sciences, and laying grounds for the perfection of society's technical and economic thinking.

Our state's youth policies are aimed at upbringing educated specialist with broad worldview and patriotic properties.

We also pay much attention to the development of physical culture and sports, thus propagating the healthy way of life and protecting the genetic fund of the nation.

One another priority direction of the domestic policies is the protection of people's health.

Over the past years, with the aim to accelerate the reforming of the healthcare system, the Government of the country adopted a series of documents aimed at bringing the medical service to conformity with modern requirements and improving the state of the branch as a whole.

Over the period of independence, more than 700 healthcare institutions were constructed, repaired or reconstructed. More than 400m somonis were spent on the purchase of medical equipment.

In the three years to come, about 400 medical institutions will be constructed or rehabilitated.

With regard to the tasks set up by us, this year 400m somonis will be spent on healthcare from the state budget, which exceeds by 140m somonis, or 55 percent, the analogous figure of the previous year.

Along with state budgetary means, foreign grants are also used for improving the state of hospitals and polyclinics, strengthening their material and technical base, and introducing new methods of medical care.

At present, 30 investment projects are in the process of implementation, the total cost being 450m somonis, and the money should be spent effectively and purposefully.

We should also improve the quality of health protection, introduce healthy competition and organize medical service on the base of using modern technologies and upbringing high-skilled specialists of the healthcare system.

To achieve these goals, we should, first of all, clearly determine which set of medical services will be guaranteed by the state and which services will be rendered by private medicine. We must provide vast opportunities for the development of various forms of the protection of people's health.

Therefore, concurrently with the guaranteed state funding of the branch, the Ministry of Health must pay serious attention to the development of private medicine and per capita financing of the institutions of primary medical and sanitary help.

In the field of social protection of population, the Government of the country pays much attention to the further formation of a modern system of social protection, provision of pensions, as well as to raising the efficacy of the state policies aimed at supporting low-income groups of population and establishing new jobs.

The measures worked out by us in this direction will make it possible to implement state and special programs, and raise the level and quality of life standards.

The strict observance of the Law on putting in order folk customs and rites is of paramount importance under the current circumstances.

In the two years of the operation of the Law, our citizens saved 2b 800m somonis.

In the three months preceding the adoption of the Law, more than 15 thousand heads of cattle and 5.5 thousand heads of small-cattle were slaughtered for holding 25 thousand ceremonies and rites. As the first three months of this year regards, these numbers decreased by 11 thousand and 200 heads of cattle and 11 thousand and 500 heads of small-cattle.

The implementation of the Law also led to the rise in the number of weddings. The figure increased by 5200 over the first quarter of the current year.

I would also like to note that at present, our experience in this field is being introduced into the life of several Muslim countries.

The purposeful support to low-income groups of population through rendering targeted help and social protection is one of priority directions of the state's social policies, and we should give a new impetus to the process of radical reforms of the system.

Another direction of our social policies is connected with the establishment of new jobs.

The present situation in labor market requires the state's constant interference with the aim of regulating the questions of establishing new jobs and ensuring the employment of population.

Over the past five years, more than 360 thousand unemployed were provided with jobs. In the three months of the current year, 40 thousand new jobs were established, and 31 thousand job-seeking citizens were employed.

As a result, we managed to hold up the process of unemployment growth, so or 2008 this figure decreased by 15 percent compared with 2007.

It is to be noted that the global economic crisis is already affecting our labor market. Therefore, to minimize this negative impact, heads of all ministries and agencies, executive bodies of state power in regions, towns and districts, state-run and private organizations and institutions must establish as more as possible new jobs.

The Government of Tajikistan and heads of local executive bodies of state power are instructed to establish at least 180 thousand jobs this year and 100 thousand new jobs in each of the years to come.

To minimize, as far as possible, the negative impact of the global economic crisis on our labor market, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population must in the shortest time create the base of realistic data about jobs, with consequent informing unemployed citizens through mass media and by way of organizing fairs of vacant occupations.

The successful regulation of labor market will help broaden the possibilities of state employment agencies.

The unemployment in the country is also caused by the fact that some groups of population do not possess any profession or handicraft.

In other words, considerable part of labor reserves consists of those who is not ready to work in various branches of economy, particularly in industry and construction.

To correct the situation, a network of adults' vocational training centers was established, where significant work was accomplished to ensure professional training of adults with the consideration of the requirements of labor market and national economy. Yet, the possibilities of such centers, which may only train 10 to 12 thousand people annually, cannot be called satisfactory.

Therefore, to solve the above-mentioned problems, ministries of education, labor and social protection of population, together with employers, must work out professional standards of worker specialties and organize, on the basis of vocational

schools and professional lyceums, short-term courses of raising the qualification and instructing the professions needed by the unemployed.

Esteemed audience,

Undoubtedly, culture is the embodiment of national spirit, customs, traditions and historical memory of any people or nation. So far, humankind has not created another more effective means of making peoples closer and reaching universal unity.

Every year, the Government of the country spends considerable sums on the development of culture and supporting representatives of science and arts. In the past two years, the volume of funding increased as much as two and a half times.

At present, we are at the stage of perfecting our national state. In this crucial period, addressing to works of famed ancestors of the Tajik people and its civilization is a creative means of stirring up the process of the formation of national idea and national self-cognizance, as well as strengthening the pillars of our civilized civil society and spiritual foundations of the independent state of Tajikistan.

That is why today our cultural policy is directed towards studying and glorifying outstanding sons of the Tajik people, reviving and using their universal values in the interests of society.

This year, we declared the Year of the Commemoration of the Great Imam - the famed Muslim jurist and the founder of an influential school in Islamic jurisprudence. In this connection, I would like to draw your attention to some aspects of religion and religiosity in our country.

Of late, voices are heard time and again that in our state policies we allegedly turned away from secular values, giving priority to religious ones.

If we take into consideration that 99 percent of our country's population are the followers of Islam, we understand that respect to it as a great source of morale and spirituality is quite natural. According to our Constitution, in the Republic of Tajikistan ideological pluralism, freedom of conscience and equality of all religions and faiths are guaranteed.

These fundamental principles of state and religion relations are clearly formulated in the recently adopted Law of the Republic of Tajikistan 'On freedom of conscience and religious associations'.

Expressing respect for our people's will, I once again stress the inviolability of constitutional pillars of our state - its independence and its being democratic, secular and rule-of-law-based - and decisively declare that we will never turn off the road chosen by us.

In this year's Address I deem it necessary to draw your attention to the question which I had already touched upon for various occasions before. This year the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan 'On language' will be twenty.

Considering the fact that the said Law was adopted before Tajikistan gaining independence and that nowadays it does not fully meet the requirements of our time, we, together with linguists and jurist, worked out a draft of the revised law on language.

I am absolutely sure that the new document will give a new impetus to strengthening the status of the state language and lay a reliable legal base for its development.

We should not forget that without the development of the state language, which is an important factor of strengthening our national self-cognizance and statehood, we will not be independent in the full sense of the word.

This century is called the age of informatics. It is quite natural, because information is closely connected with economy, scientific and technical progress, environment protection, industrial production and politics.

At the same time, we should not forget that the word may both create and demolish. In this connection, I would like to draw your attention to the question that is causing our serious anxiety these days.

You might be aware that in the past several years a deliberate and ill-intentioned campaign against Tajikistan has been conducted by various Internet sites. It is quite evident that the independence of the Tajik state and our multi-vector policy are not to certain circles' liking.

Suffice is to cast a glance at the headlines of biased and obviously ordered materials to get an impression as if our state did not manage to reach political, economic and social stability, while the prospects of its development look murky.

I will cite just one example. An analysis conducted by experts tells that in 2004-2007 through Internet sites operating in Tajikistan about 30 thousand news and reports were spread. More than 80 percent of them were nothing but slander, backbiting, biased items and groundless forecasts.

Today, this undesirable process is only picking up pace. The informational war unleashed against us in as early as the 90s of the past century pursues but one filthy goal consisting of disparaging the role of independent Tajikistan in the world community, defiling the Tajik nation and imbuing our people with pessimism and lack of belief in a better future.

Soon we'll celebrate the 20th anniversary of the independence of Tajikistan. During that period, the state of Tajiks occupied a fitting place among other countries of the world and was recognized as a full member of the international community. Of course, there are still many unsolved problems in the life of our society.

We are fully aware of them and are constantly taking measures to correct existing shortcomings and mistakes. Yet the accomplishments and achievements of the noble people of Tajikistan are generally known, and their defiance is the utmost injustice.

The most important thing is that peace, calmness, political stability, national unity, spirit of the nation's consolidation and creativity are reigning in this country. But this contradicts to the interests of certain evil-wishers of the Tajik nation and the state of Tajiks.

The Tajik people should be aware of the goals and intentions of our nation's evil-wishers, preserving political vigilance and in no way becoming despondent.

Our national interest require that mass media not only be a mighty informational instrument, but also serve as the state's shield in this informational war imposed on us, give adequate answers to slanderous reports and articles, assist to preserving the stability of society and reinforce people's belief in bright future.

At the same time, under the circumstances of the global financial and economic crisis, political parties, public associations, non-governmental organizations and periodical press must put independence, unity, the interest of the state and the nation above all partisan interests, thus making proper contribution to achieving our strategic goals.

Esteemed audience,

Among main tasks of the state are the protection of human rights and freedoms, as well as ensuring rule of law and legal order. Much work has been done in this direction so far.

We must continue the process of perfecting the legislative ground, taking into consideration the development of our society. Thus, it would be expedient to adopt a new Housing Code and amend the Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan in what regards economic crimes.

The main instrument of protecting human rights and ensuring rule of law is the judicial branch of power. With the aim of strengthening and perfecting the judicial power, the Program of the Judicial and Legal Reform was adopted in 2007.

To further reinforce the judicial power and raise the role of courts in the comprehensive protection of human rights and freedoms, as well as legal interests of the state, organizations and institutions, it would be expedient to work out a new comprehensive program of the development of judicial system.

For their turn, the Supreme Court, the High Economic Court and the Council of Justice must take efficient measures for correcting existing shortcomings, selecting magistrates and staff of courts and raising their professional skills.

In the field of ensuring national security, peaceful life of society, stable socio-political situation, rule of law and order, as well as preventing and combating crime, much work was also done by law enforcement agencies.

As a result, the level of crime decreased to an extent, while the degree of disclosure of crimes improved. The level of special and professional skills increased, and the material and technical base of these agencies is constantly strengthened.

One of undesirable phenomena is corruption which undermines the pillars of the state and society, inflicting huge economic and moral damage.

It should be noted that over not so long a period of its activities, the Agency for State Financial Control and Combating Corruption has made a considerable work aimed at preventing and disclosing corruption-related crimes. Yet, there are still many unsolved questions in this field.

Therefore, the Agency for State Financial Control and Combating Corruption, in cooperation with relevant bodies, must take additional measures to strengthen the activities in this direction.

Ensuring the security of the country and peaceful life of our society depend in great deal on the effective activities of military units and detachments. All necessary measures were taken to reinforce defense capability of the country, secure the protection of state border, raise the level of military preparedness and improve the material-and-technical and cadre provision of these structures.

I remind that the activities of law enforcement agencies and military structures were discussed in detail this past January during the meeting of the Republic of Tajikistan's Security Council, which adopted relevant decisions aimed at correcting the existing shortcomings.

At the same time, I once again remind chief executives of all law enforcement agencies and leaders of all units of the Armed Forces that they must take additional measures for raising the level of combat preparedness and professional skills of the military, upbringing the feelings of patriotism and fidelity to the Motherland among soldiers and officers, ensuring strict military discipline, as well as preventing all kinds of law-breaches, first of all, corruption-related acts and illicit circulation of drugs.

Esteemed members of Majlisi Milli and deputies of Majlisi Namoyandagon,

While securing the needs of our country, the foreign policy of the state is being coordinated with its interior policies, which, taken as a whole, actively promotes our socio-economic development.

In our foreign policy, we have chosen and successfully abide by the principle of 'open doors', which provides for the reliable and pragmatic protection of the national interests of Tajikistan internationally.

Based on this principle, we ensure the protection of our national interests, first of all, within the framework of international law and by all legal means available.

I stress that, basing on generally recognized principles of international

relations, the Republic of Tajikistan will pursue broad, effective and constructive cooperation with all concerned countries of the world.

For our country, like for the majority of the UN member states, one of the most vital questions is the provision of sustainable development.

Taking this into consideration in relations with its partners, Tajikistan sees constructive dialogue and search for optimal ways of solving problems as fundamental principles of its foreign policy.

Within the framework of this process, the Republic of Tajikistan closely cooperates with the UN, which is an indispensable universal organization, and supports its reforming aimed at raising the efficacy of its activities.

Along with this, our country is in favor of mutually profitable and equal cooperation in the post-Soviet area. Regarding the Eurasian Economic Community I would like to say it may become a main instrument of integration processes.

In our regional policies we give priority to the formation of a constructive climate of cooperation, first of all, with neighboring states. This priority is determined by our historical commonness, economic relations, cultural and historical closeness of our peoples.

We will press towards further strengthening and developing the relations of friendship, good-neighborliness and broad cooperation, because one cannot imagine the prospects of Central Asian stability without such cooperation.

Constructive and efficient regional economic relations, on the success of which peaceful life of Central Asian nations depends in great deal, should promote free travels of citizens and unhampered transference of capitals, goods, commodities, services and labor force.

Unless and until we reach these goals, our country will suffer from serious economic damage, particularly under the circumstances of the all-embracing financial crisis. That is why Tajikistan always was, is and will be in favor of economic integration, which is a mighty factor of the sustainable development of the region.

Dear friends,

Of late, there have been much of arguments and talks among the Central Asian states concerning the issues of water and energy. That gives the impression as if the process is supported with a certain goal by some concerned forces.

In particular, some argue that the implementation of hydropower projects in Tajikistan will allegedly inflict damage on neighboring countries. In this connection, I must once again stress that statements are absolutely groundless.

The construction of hydropower facilities in Tajikistan will in no way lead to decrease in the volumes of water in trans-boundary rivers, or to the worsening of ecological situation.

In the Soviet epoch, while planning the construction of large hydropower station in upper course countries, two goals were taken into consideration: firstly, the production of cheap electricity for the entire region and secondly, water supply of new arable lands in lower course countries, because the upper course countries, being mostly mountainous, do not possess lands for reclamation.

In other words, without the water reservoirs which will be constructed in the upper course countries, water supply of existing arable lands and further land reclamation will be impossible.

This was unreservedly confirmed by independent experts and famed scientists from Europe.

On the other hand, it is quite obvious that hydropower stations cannot 'swallow' rivers, as opposed to arable lands which absorb 80 to 90 percent of incoming water.

Implementing its hydropower projects, the Republic of Tajikistan pursues the politics of transparency and observance of common interests, including those of its neighbors.

Taken as a whole, the construction of hydropower facilities inside Tajikistan is aimed at the balanced solution of the water-and-energy problems of the region.

I must draw attention to the fact that we have no right to prolong the sufferings of our people which they have been experiencing for fifteen years in the winter season.

Addressing to the fraternal peoples of Central Asia, I would like to stress with all determination and clarity: the Tajik people, one of the most ancient nations on this land, has for many centuries lived with its neighbors in peace and concord.

Continuing this good tradition of our ancestors, we will never and in no way leave our neighbors without water.

The problem of providing all humankind with pure water is day by day taking on its importance. It has various aspects - legal, social, economic and ecological - and affects, in this or that degree, all countries and regions of the world. It was confirmed in the course of discussions at the 5th Global Water Forum in Istanbul recently.

We are convinced that the UN and other international organizations will render a more considerable and serious assistance to the countries of Central Asia in improving the situation in this field.

Otherwise, in near future the water problem will become the main problem of the region.

To make use of vast reserves of pure drinking water in the Sarez Lake in the interests of the peoples inhabiting the region, we once again call on the Central Asian countries to make their contribution to the establishment of an international consortium, which could implement this proposal.

We hope that our efforts in this direction will be supported by foreign partners and our neighbors.

Dear friends,

Today the mankind is facing new threats, including international terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, organized trans-national crime, global warming and infectious diseases.

Tajikistan fully supports the world community in the struggle against international terrorism and makes its contribution to it.

At the same time, we stress the necessity of removing the causes and factors leading to the emergence of terrorism. Those are poverty, lack of real justice in the world order, low level of literacy, national separatism, cultural contradictions and selfish acts of some states on the international scene.

The Republic of Tajikistan will lead active struggle against terrorism within the frameworks of the UN and anti-terrorist coalition.

In this field, we will also broaden cooperation with international organizations, including Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Collective Security Treaty Organization, Commonwealth of Independent States and Organization of Islamic Conference.

Tajikistan will continue active international cooperation aimed at combating the trafficking and illicit circulation of drugs.

We deem it expedient to establish a single informational center under the UN sponsorship to secure the efficacy of combating drugs-related crimes.

Tajikistan is interested in the increase of investments from Russia, China, America, Europe, Arab countries and other states, and advocates the development of

firm bilateral and multilateral inter-state relations based on economic pragmatism and good mutual understanding.

It is quite natural that in future we will strengthen our fruitful cooperation with Persian-speaking countries, actively assisting to the restoration of peace and stability, as well as economic development of Afghanistan.

Among main directions of Tajikistan's foreign policy were and will be the protection of rights and interests of our citizens and migrant workers abroad, strengthening of the country's positive image in the region and the world, ensuring the informational security and more active humanitarian diplomacy.

In other words, the Republic of Tajikistan pursues its foreign policy in such a way that it help solve acute problems standing in front of the state and the nation.

Dear fellow-countrymen,

Esteemed members of Majlisi Milli and Deputies of Majlisi Namoyandagon,

The main directions of interior and foreign policies of the state and the Government of Tajikistan are mainly related to preserving the obtained level of socio-economic development of the country, strengthening and broadening mutually profitable cooperation of Tajikistan with all countries of the world.

Among factors of minimizing the effect of the crisis on our national economy, cooperation and mutual assistance of all branches of power may be listed.

Here, Majlisi Oli of the Republic of Tajikistan may play a significant and efficient role.

I note with satisfaction that thanks to their fruitful activity in the past years, the deputies of the current convocation of Majlisi Oli adopted and endorsed many laws, programs, strategies and international acts which, undoubtedly, created the necessary legal grounds for the development of society, strengthening stability and calmness, and reinforcement law and order.

Therefore, I express my thankfulness to the members of Majlisi Milli and deputies of Majlisi Namoyandagon of Majlisi Oli of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Seizing the opportunity, I would like to remind you that ahead, in February 2010, are the elections of the country's Parliament and local representative organs.

All necessary conditions must be created for holding the elections on high level, in the atmosphere of transparency and freedom, so that people could choose their worthy representatives in the legislature.

First of all, all political forces and parties, as well as individuals which will fight for obtaining deputy's powers, will have to act in strict compliance with the Constitution and current legislation.

I am sure that this political campaign will be held on high level, in conformity with the Constitution and current laws, with the observance of the norms of tolerance, and will become a convincing proof of society's unity and consolidation, and a factor of the further development of our independent state.

The crisis that today is embracing the whole world will sooner or later come to the end. The main for us is that we should not be afraid of the present difficulties, continuing our creative activities for the sake of the progress and prosperity of our beloved Motherland.

In the period of the civil war our people survived even harder times. There is no doubt that, thanks to patience, close interaction with countries of the region and the world, broadening of economic cooperation and effective use of domestic reserves, we will overcome this crisis, too.