

ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW OF UZBEKISTAN

*Teshaboyeva Nafisa Zubaydulla qizi*

*[nafisateshaboyeva@jbnuu.uz](mailto:nafisateshaboyeva@jbnuu.uz)*

*Jizzakh branch of the National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo  
Ulugbek The Faculty of Psychology, the department of Foreign languages  
Philology and foreign languages Scientific advisor*

*Pulatova Hilola O'ktam qizi*

*[hilolapulatova29@gmail.com](mailto:hilolapulatova29@gmail.com)*

*Student of group 401-22*

**Abstract:** Uzbekistan faces several environmental challenges, including water scarcity, desertification, and pollution. The country's dependence on agriculture has led to overuse of water resources, particularly in the Aral Sea basin, resulting in the shrinking of the sea and increased salinity levels. Desertification is also a major issue, with over 40% of the country's land affected by desertification. Pollution from industrial activities and outdated infrastructure is another concern. Air pollution levels in urban areas are high due to emissions from factories and vehicles. Inadequate waste management practices contribute to soil and water pollution. Uzbekistan has made efforts to address these environmental issues through initiatives such as reforestation programs, water management projects, and promoting sustainable agriculture practices. However, more action is needed to ensure the long-term sustainability of the country's natural resources and protect its environment for future generations.

**Key words:** desertification, Aral sea, environment, water scarcity, climate change, sustainable development, environmental protection.

Uzbekistan is a landlocked country in Central Asia known for its diverse and unique environmental features. The country has a varied landscape, including deserts, mountains, and fertile valleys. One of the most notable environmental issues in Uzbekistan is the drying up of the Aral Sea, once one of the world's largest inland bodies of water. Due to unsustainable irrigation practices in the region, the sea has shrunk significantly over the past few decades, leading to severe environmental and health consequences for local communities. Deforestation is also a significant concern in Uzbekistan, as agricultural expansion and illegal logging have led to the loss of valuable forests and biodiversity. The government has implemented reforestation initiatives to combat this issue. Air pollution is another major environmental issue in Uzbekistan, particularly in urban areas where industrial activities and outdated infrastructure contribute to poor air quality. Efforts are being made to improve air quality through stricter regulations and investments in cleaner technologies. Uzbekistan faces a range of environmental challenges that require sustainable solutions and collaboration between government, businesses, and communities to protect its natural resources for future generations. Uzbekistan's increasing population and urbanization require a more sustainable use of natural resources and an end to unsustainable consumption and production patterns. The country is particularly vulnerable to the consequences of climate change, and therefore, it is essential to decarbonize its industrial, agricultural, and transport sectors while adapting to new realities. Uzbekistan has one of the world's highest energy intensities, meaning the cost of converting energy into GDP is relatively high. Inefficient energy use costs the country around 4.5 percent of its GDP annually. With 80 percent of its water coming from outside the country, Uzbekistan is vulnerable to water shortages, worsened by climate change. Environmental concerns include land degradation, soil salinization, reduced water quality, wind and water erosion, and decreased productivity of arable land. The poorest segments of the population, who rely on subsistence agriculture in arid regions, are particularly vulnerable to extreme weather events and prolonged droughts associated with the changing

climate. The disappearance of the Aral Sea serves as a reminder of the importance of sustainable water management and resource use.

The Government of Uzbekistan has been making efforts to balance economic growth with environmental protection, recognizing the need to meet present needs without compromising future opportunities. With its rapid economic development in recent years, Uzbekistan aims to effectively protect and sustainably manage its environment for the benefit of future generations.

Overview About Uzbekistan Environment Though Uzbekistan has got the rich and natural diversity, the null economic policies of Soviet Union ruined the rich Uzbekistan Environment. Uzbekistan in Central Asia is famous for its vibrant culture, monuments and unique Uzbekistan Scenery. Uzbekistan Environment was heavily affected by the high use of agrochemicals, irrigation water from the two rivers, and the lack of water for the treatment of plants. Once was the 4th largest inland sea of the world, Aral Sea has shrunk or evaporated and now more than half of its basin is now a dry, salt waste land which can be seen in Uzbekistan Tours. The salt storms and dusts wreaked the agriculture and ecosystems while highly affecting the health of the population. A large portion of plant and animal lost, arable land lost, climate conditions changed due to desertification. However, the major Uzbekistan Environment problems are soil salinity due to shrinking of Aral Sea, water pollution and land pollution. Uzbekistan Geography Nature is heavily affected when Aral Sea began to shrink and lead to the salty soil. The State Committee for Environmental Protection was established in 1992 while the NGOs gave more focus for the protection of water resources such as Amu Darya and Syr Dar Rivers as the major reason behind the Aral Sea shrinkage is the withdrawals of irrigation from the Amu Darya and Syr Darya to increase the cotton yields. Due to the lack of law enforcement, inconsistent government economic and environmental planning, and the overwhelming power centralization, makes the implementation of policies weaker. As Uzbekistan Scenery is one of the Uzbekistan Highlights, the threats to the environment and health can be minimized while all the political parties together rise to save the

environment from the root level. Uzbekistan Air Pollution As per the latest data released on 2016, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions per capita is 3.48 tons per person whereas, the total Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions in Uzbekistan were 214.70 million metric ton in 2014. Due to the salt and dust storms generated from the bottom of Aral Sea, the Uzbekistan Environment gets affected especially in Nukus City of Karakalpakstan region while heavily affecting the farm crops and health of the people in rural areas. Uzbekistan Climate & Weather for the dust storms are mainly occurs in the spring and autumn season. Another reason that causes harm to Uzbekistan Environment is the spraying of agricultural chemicals and defoliants for the cotton crop especially in rural areas. The factories and the emissions are making the air of urban areas more polluted. In the atmosphere of Uzbekistan, the high levels of heavy metals like lead, nickel, zinc, copper, mercury, and manganese have been found due to the burning of fossil fuels, waste materials, ferrous and nonferrous metallurgy.

In conclusion, Uzbekistan faces significant environmental challenges, including water scarcity, soil degradation, air pollution, and biodiversity loss. These issues are exacerbated by rapid industrialization, unsustainable agricultural practices, and insufficient environmental regulations.

Efforts to address these challenges include the implementation of conservation programs, investment in renewable energy sources, and international cooperation on environmental issues. However, more comprehensive and coordinated actions are needed to effectively protect Uzbekistan's natural resources and promote sustainable development in the country

The environmental overview of Uzbekistan highlights both challenges and opportunities for sustainable development. The country faces significant environmental issues such as water scarcity, soil degradation, air pollution, and biodiversity loss.

These issues are exacerbated by rapid industrialization, agricultural practices, and the effects of climate change. However, Uzbekistan also has a wealth of natural resources and potential for renewable energy development. With effective policies and investments in environmental protection and conservation efforts, the country can work towards mitigating these challenges and promoting a more sustainable future.

It is crucial for Uzbekistan to prioritize environmental sustainability in its development plans to ensure the well-being of its citizens and the preservation of its unique ecosystems for future generations. Collaboration with international partners and adoption of best practices in environmental management will be key in addressing these pressing issues.

Uzbekistan faces several environmental challenges, including water scarcity, deforestation, soil degradation, and air pollution. The country's economy heavily relies on agriculture, which puts pressure on its natural resources.

Water resources are particularly strained due to over-extraction for irrigation purposes and inefficient water management practices. Deforestation is also a significant issue in Uzbekistan, with large areas of forests being cleared for agricultural expansion and fuelwood extraction.

This has led to soil degradation and loss of biodiversity in the region. Air pollution is another concern, especially in urban areas where industries and transportation contribute to high levels of pollutants in the air.

The government of Uzbekistan has taken steps to address these environmental challenges through policies and initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable development and conservation efforts. However, more needs to be done to effectively address these issues and ensure the long-term health of the country's environment.

Overall, Uzbekistan's environmental overview highlights the need for greater awareness, investment, and action to protect its natural resources and mitigate the impact of climate change on the country's ecosystems.

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