

**Universal Periodic Review  
(44<sup>th</sup> working group session)  
Contribution of UNESCO to Compilation of UN information**

**Uzbekistan**

**I. RATIFICATIONS OF UNESCO CONVENTIONS**

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Date of ratification, accession, acceptance or succession</b>	<b>Declarations/Reservations</b>	<b>Recognition of specific competences of treaty bodies</b>	<b>Reference to the rights within UNESCO's field of competence</b>
Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)	Ratification: 08/12/1997			The right to education
Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)	Succession: 13/01/1993			The right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)	Ratification: 29/01/2008			The right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community
Convention on the Protection and Promotion of	Ratification: 15/11/2019			The right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community

the Cultural Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)				
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## II. REVIEW OF LEGISLATIVE, REGULATORY AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND IMPLEMENTATION

### A. THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

#### Legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks

1. The Constitution of Uzbekistan of 1992 as amended in 2014<sup>1</sup> enshrines the right to education for everyone under article 41 which states that, “Everyone shall have the right to education” and contains a provision on equal rights and non-discrimination under article 18.
2. The law on Education of 2020<sup>2</sup> guarantees “The right to education is ensured by free general secondary, secondary specialized and initial vocational education...” (article 5). This covers eleven years according to article 9. In addition, article 4 provides for “compulsory 11-year education and one-year preparation for general secondary education for children from six to seven years of age.” Similarly, article 6 provides that preschool education is compulsory for a period of one year which corresponds to the ages of six to seven years, but no provision on free pre-primary education has been identified.
3. The country recently adopted the following texts:
  - Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, No. PQ-376 of 21 September 2022 on additional measures to increase the employment of women and strengthen their health<sup>3</sup>: Aims to reduce the number of unemployed women including through the establishment of a state special fund for the support of women’s educational courses (para.1).
  - Strategy for achieving gender equality in the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030<sup>4</sup>: Includes measures to ensure gender equality in the field of education such as introducing scholarships for talented girls’ admission to higher education, establishing local and foreign educational institutions in areas in high demand for women and girls, conducting training for educators in all levels of education, among other measures.
  - Following recommendation N°101.20 of the previous UPR cycle to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Uzbekistan ratified this

<sup>1</sup> <https://constitution.uz/en>

<sup>2</sup> [LRU-637-сон 23.09.2020. On education \(lex.uz\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [UZB-114130.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Uzbekistan - Strategy for achieving gender equality in the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030. \(ilo.org\)](#)

Convention on 28th July 2021

- Decree No. PF-6275 of 9 August 2021 about measures to further improve the system of guaranteeing children's rights<sup>5</sup>: Seeks to provide state support for children with disabilities and those deprived of parental care. It aims, among other measures, "To introduce the "peer-to-peer" education program so as to restore normal life to young people who have fallen into a socially dangerous and difficult situation in educational institutions" (annex). It also seeks to make changes and additions to the classification of higher education courses and specialties and to establish new boarding institutions for orphans and children deprived of parental care.
- Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Education of 2020<sup>6</sup> whose purpose is to regulate relations in the field of education (article 1).
- Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 2020 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>7</sup> which regulates relations in the field of ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities (article 1), including in relation to their right to education (chapter 6).
- Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 2019 about pre-school education and upbringing<sup>8</sup> that regulates relations in the field of preschool education and upbringing.
- Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. LRU-562 of 2 September 2019 on guarantees with respect to equal rights and opportunities for women and men<sup>9</sup> to access all types of education and training and to promote gender education by introducing gender issues in educational programs (chapter 6).
- Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. LRU-561 of 2 September 2019 on protection of women from harassment and abuse<sup>10</sup> including by taking measures to prevent abuse of women in state educational institutions and conduction of educational outreach programs on the same issue (articles 10 and 15).

#### Legal age of marriage

4. The Family Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 1998 as amended in 2019<sup>11</sup> sets the minimum age of marriage to be 18 years (article 15). However, under exceptional cases, this age can be lowered to 17 with the agreement of the mayor.

#### Corporal punishment

5. Following recommendation N°101.194 of the previous UPR cycle to enact legislation explicitly prohibiting corporal punishment of children in all settings, Uzbekistan adopted the law on Education of 2020<sup>12</sup> which protects from corporal and psychological violence within educational institutions under articles 47 and 48.

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<sup>5</sup> [UZB-114146.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> [LRU-637-сон 23.09.2020. On education \(lex.uz\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> [LRU-641-сон 15.10.2020. On the rights of persons with disabilities \(lex.uz\)](#)

<sup>8</sup> [ZRU-595-сон 16.12.2019. About preschool education and upbringing \(lex.uz\)](#)

<sup>9</sup> [LRU-562-сон 02.09.2019. On guarantees with respect to equal rights and opportunities for women and men \(lex.uz\)](#)

<sup>10</sup> [LRU-561-сон 02.09.2019. On protection of women from harassment and abuse \(lex.uz\)](#)

<sup>11</sup> [30.04.1998. Family Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan \(lex.uz\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> [LRU-637-сон 23.09.2020. On education \(lex.uz\)](#)

### Gender equality and women's rights

6. Through recommendation N°101.177 of the previous UPR cycle, Uzbekistan was advised to take further steps to ensure gender equality in higher education. Consequently, the Strategy for achieving gender equality in the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030<sup>13</sup> was adopted and it highlights key measures to be taken to improve gender equality in higher education such as through creating a mechanism for higher education institutions that encourages women to study in the field of science, technology, engineering and mathematics “STEM” in passing their master’s and doctoral studies in government organizations and private companies and through the creation of a mechanism to identify talented girls and enrolling them to higher education.

### Persons with Disabilities

7. In the previous UPR cycle, it was recommended that Uzbekistan continues efforts to provide inclusive education to all children, including those with special needs (recommendation N°101.158) as well as finalize the elaboration of and adopt a bill on the rights of persons with disabilities (recommendation N°101.200). As cited above, Uzbekistan adopted the law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the rights of persons with disabilities<sup>14</sup> in 2020. This law aims to provide persons with disabilities with opportunities for inclusive education at all levels of learning starting from pre-school education to post-graduate education (article 11). The state will have the duty to publish didactic materials and educational tools using alternative forms of communication and to provide training on paralympic sports so as to ensure the right of persons with disabilities to recreation (article 27). Further, courses and study subjects on the rights of persons with disabilities shall be conducted in higher educational institutions of legal and humanitarian orientation (article 30). Chapter 6 of the law provides for the right of persons with disabilities to education throughout their lives through state educational institutions, specialized schools, non-state educational organizations as well as through home education.

### Enrolment rates

8. The gross enrolment rates (GER)<sup>15</sup>:
  - In pre-primary education in 2021: 44% in total, 45% male and 43% female;
  - In primary in 2021: 98% total, 99 % male and 97% female;
  - In secondary school in 2017: 90% in total, 91% male and 90% female;
  - In tertiary education in 2021: 21% in total, 23% male and 20% female.

### Government expenditure

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<sup>13</sup> [Uzbekistan - Strategy for achieving gender equality in the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030. \(ilo.org\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> <https://lex.uz/docs/5694817>

<sup>15</sup> UNESCO UIS data

<sup>16</sup> [sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org](https://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org)

9. Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP was reported by UIS<sup>16</sup> to be 4.9% in 2020, which represents 20.5% of total government expenditure.<sup>17</sup>

#### Digital education

10. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan approved the adoption of the strategy “Digital Uzbekistan 2030”<sup>18</sup> that outlines comprehensive measures for the active development of the digital economy, as well as the widespread introduction of modern information and communication technologies in all sectors and spheres including in the field of education.

#### Discrimination in education (UNESCO consultations)

11. Uzbekistan submitted a national report for the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> Consultation on the implementation of the Convention and the Recommendation against Discrimination in Education.<sup>19</sup>

### **B. FREEDOM OF OPINION AN EXPRESSION AND THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION**

#### Constitutional and legislative frameworks

12. Article 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan<sup>20</sup> recognizes the right to seek, obtain and disseminate information of each citizen, except information that is directed against the constitutional system and some other instances specified by law. It further states that “Freedom of opinions and their expression may be restricted by law if any state or other secret is involved.” Art. 30 provides that “all state bodies, public associations and officials [...] shall allow citizens access to documents, resolutions and other materials relating to their rights and interests”. Art. 67 recognizes the freedom of mass media and prohibits censorship, and states that mass media “shall act in accordance with the law [and] bear responsibility for trustworthiness of information in a prescribed manner”.
13. There are three main legal documents referring to Access to Information in Uzbekistan. Art. 3 of the Law on the Principles of and Guarantees for the Freedom of Information (1997) states that everyone has the right to freely seek, receive, research, disseminate, use and

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<sup>16</sup> [sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org](https://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org)

<sup>17</sup> [sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org](https://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org)

<sup>18</sup> [UP-6079-sleep 05.10.2020. Approval of the Strategy "Digital Uzbekistan-2030" and measures for its effective implementation \(lex.uz\)](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Database on the right to education | Observatory on the Right to Education \(unesco.org\)](#)

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.gov.uz/en/constitution/#268>

store information.<sup>21</sup>

14. Regarding information about public activities, art. 1 of the law on the Openness of the Activities of State Authorities and Administration<sup>22</sup> (2014) ensures access of individuals and legal entities to information about the activities of public authorities and administration and guarantees the right to receive information on the activities of public authorities and the administration.
15. Article 5 of the law on the Dissemination of Legal Information and Access to it<sup>23</sup> (2017) guarantees access to legal information and states that each citizen has a right to seek, receive and impart legal information without hindrance. Legal information is defined as texts of normative legal acts, official interpretations to them, explanations on the procedure for applying regulatory legal acts, decisions of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan, decisions of the Plenum of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the application of legislation, as well as materials of generalization of judicial practice. The access to legal information is free of charge.
16. Article 139 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan criminalizes defamation (denigration, according to non-official translation) in case of reoffence with fine up to fifty "monthly wages" or correctional labor up to two years<sup>24</sup>.
17. The Law on the Protection of Professional Activities of a Journalist<sup>25</sup> (1997) provides a protection mechanism for journalists within the exercise of their work. The Law states that if an international treaty establishes other rules than those provided for by the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the protection of the professional activities of a journalist, then the rules of the international treaty shall apply.

#### Implementation of the law

18. The Agency of Information and Mass Communications under the Administration of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan is an authorized body that "ensur[es] the exercise of citizen's constitutional rights to freedom of speech and information,

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<sup>21</sup> <https://lex.uz/docs/2118>

<sup>22</sup> <https://lex.uz/docs/2381138>

<sup>23</sup> <https://lex.uz/docs/3329329>

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---ilo\\_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms\\_127504.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_127504.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> <https://lex.uz/docs/2024>

strengthen[s] the role of the media in the country's socio-political and socio-economic development, create[es] equal conditions for them in the media market, and protect[s] the rights of journalists".<sup>26</sup>

19. The Public Foundation for Support and Development of National Mass Media supports the development of the media sphere, material support and realization of the rights of representatives of the media community in Uzbekistan. The Foundation's main activities include protection of journalists and bloggers.<sup>27</sup>

#### Safety of journalists

20. UNESCO recorded no killings of journalists in Uzbekistan, since systematic monitoring by the organization began in 2006 [and as at 31 January 2023]<sup>28</sup>.

### **III. RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **A. THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION**

21. Uzbekistan should be encouraged to:
- i. Increase the duration of free education in the legislation to cover at least 12 years of primary and secondary education;
  - ii. Explicitly guarantee at least one year of free and compulsory pre-school education in the legislation;
  - iii. Amend the legislation to ensure that the exceptional cases of marriage below 18 years are permitted only by judicial consent and conform to international human rights law;
  - iv. Continue to submit regularly comprehensive national reports for the periodic consultations on UNESCO's education-related standard-setting instruments, and notably on the Convention against Discrimination in Education;
  - v. Share with UNESCO any relevant information to update its country profile on UNESCO's Observatory on the Right to Education<sup>29</sup> and Her Atlas.<sup>30</sup>

#### **B. FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION AND THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION**

22. Uzbekistan is encouraged to decriminalize defamation and incorporate it into the civil code, in line with international standards.

23. Uzbekistan is encouraged to amend an access to information law in accordance with international standards, in particular by establishing an independent oversight

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<sup>26</sup> <https://aoka.uz/en/category/9>

<sup>27</sup> <https://massmedia.uz/en/pages/about>

<sup>28</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/themes/safety-journalists/observatory/country/223837>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/index.php?action=countries&lng=en>

<sup>30</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/education/girls-women-rights>

institution.

24. Uzbekistan is encouraged to co-operate with UNESCO's annual survey instrument to measure global progress on access to information and consider including relevant information in their Voluntary National Reviews under the SDGs.

### **C. RIGHT FREELY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY (CULTURAL RIGHTS)**

25. As a State Party to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), Uzbekistan is encouraged to fully implement the relevant provisions that promote access to and participation in cultural heritage and creative expressions and, as such, are conducive to implementing the right to take part in cultural life as defined in article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In doing so, Uzbekistan is encouraged to give due consideration to the participation of communities, practitioners, cultural actors and civil society organizations, as well as vulnerable groups (minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, young people and persons with disabilities), and to ensure that equal opportunities are given to women and girls to address gender disparities.

### **D. THE RIGHT TO SHARE IN SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT AND ITS BENEFITS**

26. Uzbekistan did not submit its National Report on the implementation of the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers (2017) for the consultation period from 2017 to 2020. Therefore, Uzbekistan is encouraged to report to UNESCO on its implementation actions, especially noting legislative or other measures adopted by it with the aim to ensure application of these norms and standards in national law, policy and practice paying a particular attention to the legal provisions and regulatory frameworks which ensure the implementation of human rights of scientific researchers themselves (rights of association, freedom of research, expression and publication, etc.) and human rights obligations related to the practice of science generally: the human rights related to access to and uses of scientific knowledge through education; the sharing of benefits of scientific progress and its applications; the principle of non-discrimination, requiring in this case active promotion of women and girls entering scientific careers; protection for the rights of human subjects of research; and promotion of the science society interface. Furthermore, Uzbekistan is encouraged to expand input on issues covered by the

2017 Recommendation in its national report to the UPR to allow further discussions thereon at the Human Rights Council and the formulation of specific recommendations. Within this framework, Uzbekistan is urged to consider expanding the scope of application of freedom of expression to include scientists and scientific researchers and also to address the relevant dimensions of the right to science in its reporting on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the assessment of responses thereto.