

Good afternoon esteemed delegates, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Uzbekistan, nestled in the heart of Central Asia, faces the unique challenges of being not just landlocked, but **double landlocked** with access to the ocean through at least two countries. There is **only two countries in the world** that are considered as double landlocked: **Uzbekistan and Liechtenstein.**

However, rather than seeing this as a limitation, Uzbekistan has **embraced the digital age** as a catalyst for transformation and prosperity. In recent years, Uzbekistan has made significant strides in advancing its **digital infrastructure and capabilities.** With a growing young population eager to embrace technology, Uzbekistan has prioritized investments in **telecommunications, digital government and digital literacy programs.**

One notable example is the government's ambitious **“Digital Uzbekistan-2030” strategy,** which aims to accelerate the country's digital transformation across various sectors, including **education, healthcare, finance and governance.** Through this comprehensive roadmap, Uzbekistan is

seeking to harness the power of digital technologies to **drive economic growth, improve public services and enhance the quality of life for its citizens.**

Furthermore, Uzbekistan has set **ambitious goals** for its digital development for the upcoming years. For instance:

First, reaching **TOP-30** in the UN E-Government Development Index. Digitalisation of **over 600 public services** and their provision through **unified e-services portal**, as well as making them **proactive** is boosting **transparency, digital inclusion** and helping **reduce digital divide.**

Second, increasing **IT export levels to 5 billion USD.** Uzbekistan has turned focus towards digital services and their outsource based on its geographical and strategical location. Last year alone, IT services export has reached over **340 million USD** and is projected to reach **1 billion USD** by the end of 2024.

Third, preparing at least **300 thousand IT specialists** for perspective and export oriented digital development directions. First two goals set cannot be reached without qualified human resources.

Therefore, Uzbekistan having population of **37 million people** and **over 60 percent** of them being youth, it is clear that Uzbekistan is putting immense amount of work and government support on **training of young specialists.**

Uzbekistan recognizes the importance of **regional and international cooperation** in fostering digital development and is committed to creating a conducive environment for **digital innovation and entrepreneurship.** The establishment of **technoparks, startup incubators** and **investment incentives** for digital enterprises underscores Uzbekistan's dedication to fostering a thriving digital ecosystem that drives innovation and creates economic opportunities.

Uzbekistan welcomes international and private organisations to cooperation towards development of **digital infrastructure, digital economy** and **IT outsourcing.**

However, challenges remain, including ensuring **equal access to digital technologies** and **diminishing the digital divide,** particularly in **remote and underserved areas.**

In conclusion, Uzbekistan stands as a beacon of hope and progress in the digital transformation of landlocked nations and is ready to work bilaterally and multilaterally on overcoming such challenges. By leveraging technology, fostering innovation, and embracing regional cooperation, Uzbekistan demonstrates that geographical location should not be a barrier to development in the digital age.

Let me seize this moment to reaffirm our commitment to supporting the digital aspirations of landlocked countries like Uzbekistan, ensuring that no nation is left behind in the digital revolution.

Thank you.