

## "Food security, condition for a prosperous state"

*Distinguished officials and delegates, ladies and gentlemen;*

*Honorable auditory,*

On behalf of Silk Road Association and as a member of Romanian business community, I thank the Government of Uzbekistan for the excellent arrangements made in hosting this event. I am delighted to be once again in Uzbekistan, a country renowned for its wonderful people, profound history, and rich culture.

I am truly impressed by the progress Uzbekistan has made in the very short period since independence. I congratulate President Karimov and the Government for the hard work they have done to raise the living standards of the Uzbekistan people.

Over the past decade, the growth rates of the Uzbek economy surpassed growth rates of the developed, and many developing, economies in the world.

In 2013, GDP grew for 8%, and in particular agricultural – by 6.8%. This is a testimony to the success of Uzbekistan's model of prudent macroeconomic and fiscal management, and the "gradualism" approach to development.

At the beginning of this year, President Karimov presented his priorities of economic program for 2014. His vision for social and economic development made possible the current leadership of Uzbekistan in Central Asia, and its population being provided with the best social structure.

In Agriculture, improved soil reclamation and reduced area of land at critical groundwater level, together with the adoption of the State program of complex measures on improvement of a meliorative condition of irrigated lands and rational use of water resources for 2013-2017 are important measures aimed at consolidating progress achieved so far.

Being active in the field of food supply infrastructure, I am directly interested in the future of what I call "**food security**", a concept that - if ignored - in my opinion can represent the beginning of a threat to population health.

It is almost impossible now to avoid the global context, especially in this sector. Please allow me to bring to your consideration some aspects, in this respect:

- *The international provisions estimate that by the year 2050 the global population will be near to 10 billion inhabitants (in the last 3 decades global population increased with 2.4 billion - 60%). This demographic explosion could be imputable, mostly, to abuses and excesses of modern civilization: desertification, famine, biodiversity decline, climatic heating, pollution. At the same time, an accelerated growth of the urban population could be noticed, and the menace is intensified by the diminishing of the agricultural areas.*
- *In this respect, the rural and agricultural sector, where the agricultural production continues to be vital for the population, has the capacity to become a base sector for the economy of a state, or even of a wider region. Besides the importance of small scale agriculture for the rural population, gains larger importance large scale agriculture, which can supply the capacity of outrun the menace of a food crisis by raising the agricultural production, through the use of cutting-edge technologies. Thus, the analysis of the food security concept is imposing, concept which, at macro level, must be taken into account from the perspective of 2 (two) components: **availability and accessibility**.*
- ***Availability** means that food must exist, physically, in material state, that must be produced constantly in sufficient quantities.*
- *Regarding population - resources relation, since the XVIII-th century the distortion between demographic growth and resources was highlighted, a report on "ecological impact of nations" concluding that the global population is already surpassing by 20% the capacity of the globe to ensure the satisfaction of needs. In order to ensure food for the existent population and for the forthcoming, it is mandatory to increase the food resources, with accent on biologic material value used in agriculture, with high production potential, even specialized for the needs of the modern times, but with respect of the agrotechnical rules. This is why, at global level, the environment - economy issue is raised, due to its complex and multi-dimensional nature (*technological, economical, political, environmental*) and implications.*
- *This is one of the main reasons why is necessary to be aware that changing the destination of the arable areas could be negative (for the environment, on one hand, and for the security of the population access at food sources, on the other*

hand), especially by deforestation and urbanization, and these, together with prolonged cultivation on the same types of crops on large areas, have negative impact on soil quality, meaning diminishing the production capacity.

- *In the same time*, one of the pillars of a competitive agricultural production is ensuring the *necessary water supply*, context in which it is obvious the vital importance of an efficient irrigation system, and the wise use of water presumes focus on diminishing water resources specter.
- By **FAO analyses**, water scarcity has **3 dimensions**:
  - ✓ **physical** (when the demand is higher than the available supply),
  - ✓ **infrastructural** (when the water demand cannot be satisfied because of ineffective infrastructures)
  - ✓ **institutional** (when secure and equitable supply of water to consumers is not ensured by public authorities),
- *These dimensions* request investments both in water resources exploitation infrastructure, as well as in irrigation infrastructure (mentioning here the necessity of an educational campaign targeting the population, in terms of water waste). Plus, being known that agriculture is the greatest water consumer (70% of the water which can be used, in some parts even 90-95%), the food waste becomes more important, as a production and utilized water that is not reaching its goal - to reach the consumer, thus becoming a pressure factor on water scarcity.
- *In the same time*, a factor which could not be neglected is the water quality, worldwide there are water reserves that cannot be used for human consumption or agricultural use, because they are affected by various polluting elements. In range of activities of Silk Road Association, the water polluting issue drew my attention, therefore I found useful, as a contribution to the future of food security of my country, to invest in biodegradable solutions and products for removing the water pollution effects - especially by hydrocarbons.
- *In this way* we see that, from the demographic growth perspective, the environment problematic will sharpen in this century due the water scarcity

problem, growing crops dedicated to bio-fuels (which are diminishing the offer of food products), and the degradation of agricultural areas.

- *Accessibility* means the existing possibility of getting to it, both by buying capacity component, and by food transport infrastructure (otherwise a good reason for a growing buy power of the population, by engaging people in construction of infrastructure). Food insecurity is not necessarily a matter of physical absence, if it is produced in sufficient quantities, but because is not uniformly distributed at regional or national scale.
- I consider that a State looking at the future of its nation is obliged to consider, for the assuring of food security, making investments in technological solutions for wise use of agricultural exploitations, innovative solutions for pollution removal, in water exploitation infrastructures, and, last but not least, in transportation infrastructure, fields in which, as a member of Romanian business community, I can say that my country, Romania, is willing to tighten the bilateral relations with the Republic of Uzbekistan, will that I see also at our hosts, thus I can say, with all my confidence, that I see a prosperous future of our friend countries on the **"New Silk Road"**.

*Honorable auditory,*

I once again congratulate the Government of Uzbekistan under the leadership of President Karimov. Food programme in Uzbekistan shows a clear and realistic vision for the future and brings a long term, sustainable approach to ensure effective growth of the level and quality of life!

- In the end, I would like to mention that the Silk Road Association is actively involved in promoting the experience of Romanian specialists in fields like agriculture, water industry, transports, pollution prevention, energy trade, trading, therefore we are open for organizing round tables, seminars, conferences between business associations from Romania and Uzbekistan, adding to the efforts for strengthening the bilateral dialogue and to conduct to a tighten bilateral uzbek-romanian relations.

Thank you for your attention!