Strategic aspects of the development of the Fuzuli city in the revitalization of the Karabakh economic region

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Abstract.
The purpose of the research is to investigate the strategic aspects of the development of the Fuzuli city in the revitalization of the Karabakh economic region. Development resources and natural potential of the region have been disclosed. Tasks and targets for the rehabilitation and development of the territories freed from occupation have been given. Formation and development processes of Fuzuli city, which is one of the important territorial units of Karabakh economic region, are summarized. Specific characteristics of the socio-economic development of the Fuzuli city during the period of the Soviet Union have been revealed. The regional impact of the restoration of Fuzuli city was considered. The strategic importance of Fuzuli International Airport was brought to attention. In the near future, a group of recommendations and suggestions were made on the important role of accelerating the development of the city of Fuzuli in the revival of the Karabakh economic region.

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Now the issues of restoration of the liberated territories of Azerbaijan, creation of appropriate infrastructure, return of people to their homeland in a planned and deliberate manner have emerged as strategic tasks [1]. It should be noted that the socio-economic revival of the territories freed from occupation in Azerbaijan has entered a relatively faster phase, and we believe that this phase will soon be replaced by an intensive phase. We believe that the governmental assessment of the problems of socio-economic revitalization of territories freed from occupation in Azerbaijan at the highest level and taking consistent steps to solve them shows that the state of Azerbaijan is determined to develop these territories in a short period of time [2]. Our country has enough resources, economic strength and power for this [3].

After the Great Karabakh Victory, Azerbaijan started large-scale works in the direction of reviving the territories freed from occupation and restoring them on the basis of the highest technologies. The goal is to raise Karabakh to the highest standards in terms of socio-economic development, to turn this region into a dynamically developing region with a high standard of living. Here, restoration and development of territories freed from occupation on the basis of systematic and comprehensive principles requires optimal approaches. The revival and development strategy should reflect the advanced world experience of these areas.

In order to develop the Karabakh economic region, the socio-economic development priorities of the territorial units included in the Karabakh economic region, should be determined, the natural resource opportunities should be objectively investigated and evaluated, and their opportunities in economic development should be revealed. Most of the regions included in Karabakh are rich in resources, and it is possible to develop various economic sectors here. It will further strengthen the strategic role of the Karabakh economic region, give a substantial impact to the development of the region, the increase of the socio-economic power of Azerbaijan in the region as a whole and the strengthening of statehood, the protection of our borders, and the faster restoration of the liberated territories of Karabakh. As for the socio-economic development of other regions included in the Karabakh economic region, these are
directly related to historical, economic and geographical traditions.

In modern times, the processes of revitalization of territories freed from occupation and the gradual intensification of the Great Return are being watched with interest and attention all over the world. Azerbaijan, as a dynamically developing country of the region, managed to strengthen the attributes of an independent state, including creating a brave and heroic national army, liberated our occupied lands and is currently restoring the destroyed territories. The Fuzuli city has been destroyed for nearly 30 years and will not be forgotten after thousands of years. The Armenian invaders left no stone unturned in the city of Fuzuli, every building was razed to the ground and the surface of the land was degraded.

It should be noted that on October 18, 2021, in a meeting with representatives of the Fuzuli district community, President Ilham Aliyev stated that: "The importance of the liberation of the Fuzuli city is also related to the strategic location of this city... The liberation of the Fuzuli city gave us moral strength. From the point of view of these factors, the formation and development of the infrastructure of the Fuzuli city is the focus of special attention".

The Fuzuli city has an ancient history, this city operated under the name of Karabulag from 1403 to 1905. Unfortunately, in later times, under the influence of the Russian Empire, the name of the settlement was changed and given the name of the tsarist colonel Karyagin. Fuzuli has an important place in the historical processes related to the formation and development of Karabakh and was established as a territorial unit in 1827 under the name of Karabulag. During the former USSR on August 8, 1930, it acquired the status of an administrative district and was named the Karyagin district. Later, it was named Fuzuli in 1950 in honor of the 400th anniversary of the great Azerbaijani poet Muhammad Fuzuli. The territory of the region is formed by sloping plains, as well as the South-Eastern foothills of the Karabakh mountain range. The district has strategic importance as a border area along the Araz river with the southern borders of Azerbaijan – Iran. The total area of the district is 1.39 thousand square
kilometers, and the population is 134 thousand people. The city of Horadiz, which currently functions as the district center along with the city of Fuzuli, has a modern infrastructure. There are 82 villages in Fuzuli district, along with 11 new Gayidis, 5 Zobucuk, and 1 Fin settlements built for internally displaced persons.

Hazırda Füzuli şəhərini ilə bərabər, rayon mərkəzi funksiyasını yerinə yetirən Horadiz şəhəri müasir infrastruktura malikdir. Füzuli rayonunda məcburi köçkənlər üçün salınmış 11 yeni Qayıdış, 5 Zobucuk, 1 Fin qəsəbələri ilə yanaşı, 82 kənd mövcuddur.

After the liberation of the region from occupation the restoration and rapid development processes of Fuzuli city are noteworthy. Conceptual approaches related to the development of Fuzuli city have been defined. The construction of national and international road infrastructure is being carried out at an unprecedented speed. The works on the construction of the Fuzuli-Hadrut highway and the Horadiz-Aghband railway line are deepening now. The construction of the Ahmedbeyli-Fuzuli-Shusha Zafar road is extremely important in the socio-economic development of Karabakh. At the same time, large-scale measures are being implemented in the water supply of the district and the region, fundamental works are being carried out for supply of electricity. The special care and initiatives of the head of state are of decisive importance in the implementation of these measures. The "Fuzuli" substation was inaugurated with the participation of the President of the country and on February 14, 2021, the head of state participated in the foundation laying ceremony of the Horadiz-Aghband railway line. In addition, on August 29, 2021, the President of the country and the first lady got acquainted with the progress of the construction works at the Fuzuli International Airport. This airport has the status of the largest airport in the region and at the same time the role of the strategic air gate of our Karabakh. The opening of the International Airport was held on October 26, 2021 with the participation of the President of Turkey R.T. Erdogan. The construction of this airport was carried out quickly, and its main function is to ensure the international integration of Karabakh along with
other areas of the country. At the same time, Fuzuli airport is also of special importance as an important strategic project and transport-logistics center.

It is important to create multifunctional economic mechanisms and effectively organize their activities in the realization of the mentioned issues [4; 5; 6; 7]. At the same time, the organization of technological parks can also give positive results. Thus, it is possible to develop various economic sectors in technoparks and attract related investments [8]. For example, the production of highly competitive industrial products was achieved in the mini-factories of the modern industrial technology park created in the Sumgayit city [9]. In the near future infrastructure will lead to a significant increase in socio-economic development, the re-prosperity of villages freed from occupation and the Fuzuli city will become one of the dynamically developing and attractive cities not only of Karabakh, but also of the region. Thus, the region has economic resources, including the potential for intensive development of a number of traditional and new economic sectors. In Fuzuli, traditionally, agricultural fields - animal husbandry, viticulture, plant growing, first of all, grain growing, and the production of food wheat, which is its main segment, have been developed. The development of industrial areas has also been in focus, especially the development of the agro-industrial complex and the construction industry, and the activity of processing enterprises has been productive. Such processes can have a positive effect on socio-economic development in the region and at the same time accelerate innovative development processes [10; 11].

The Great Return to the Fuzuli city has already begun and the master plan envisages redevelopment of Fuzuli has been approved. Based on this plan, a transport network will be established to provide access to Fuzuli city from all directions, and 3 ring roads will be built. In addition, the development of public transport will be a priority. The processes of improving the ecological environment, expanding the "green" economy elements, providing recreational areas, creating modern parks and squares are accelerating. The main measures and areas related to ensuring the employment of the
population will be implemented in the eastern zone of Fuzuli city, that is, in the area close to the airport. The Fuzuli city will be developed on the basis of "smart city" principles, digital and modern technologies. It is appropriate to develop and implement strong and effective mechanisms for the realization of all these mentioned [12].

It is planned to settle 50 thousand people in the Fuzuli city by 2040, and as a result, the population will increase by 2.5 times compared to 1993. Residential buildings will be built in the city, 9 general and secondary educational institutions, 13 preschool educational institutions will operate in the city. The establishment of a vocational training institution is nearing completion. In addition, other social facilities - a hospital, a health center, a sports and cultural center, parks and squares, will be built and the construction of some of them has already begun.

In general, development of the Fuzuli city based on the principles of sustainable development, i.e. improvement of management, efficiency of the economy, provision of social welfare and the principles of environmental protection will be a priority. The implementation of these works is now entering an intensive phase. An example of this is the beginning of the return of Fuzuli city residents to their homes, as well as the commissioning of a number of social infrastructures [13].

On August 23, 2023, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva and President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, his wife Ziroatkhon Mirziyoyeva have attended a ceremony to inaugurate the secondary school No.1 named after Mirzo Ulugbek in Fuzuli. In the near future, "BI-Group" Holding of Kazakhstan will complete the construction of the Kurmangazy Center for the Development of Creativity for children in the city of Fuzuli. This center is designed for 600 children. The construction of similar socio-cultural and educational infrastructure by Turkic-speaking countries should be considered as an expression of the special interest of these countries in the Karabakh region.

We would like to mention a group of proposals for the purpose of the socio-economic development of the Fuzuli city
and the efficient use of the resources of the Fuzuli region:

1. When considering the resources of Fuzuli region, the organization of the multifunctional "Food and light industry" cluster can be assessed as attractive. Potential investors of the country, higher education and scientific-research institutions, scientific-technological centers, as well as investor companies from foreign countries can be actively involved in this cluster, and the main reason for this is the presence of most types of transport infrastructure, including air transport infrastructure and logistics potential.

2. The prospect of creating an "Innovations and scientific-technical" free economic zone or an "Export-production and customs" SEZ based on the experience of the Shannon (Ireland) international airport at the base of Fuzuli International Airport is high.

3. The establishment of the "Horadiz cross-border export-production and customs" SEZ crossing point with Iran, which existed even during the former Soviet Union can also have a great effect. Here, the factor of integration of our compatriots living on the other side of Araz and strengthening of trade and economic relations with Azerbaijan should be considered as a strategic point.

4. The construction of a large sugar factory in Fuzuli district can play an important role in increasing the production of sugar beet and strengthening employment, providing the population of the surrounding regions with quality sugar products.

5. Taking into account that the Zangezur International Transport Corridor will be opened in the future, it is appropriate to create a network of export-oriented industrial processing enterprises around the city of Horadiz, etc.

Thus, the processes of the socio-economic development of Fuzuli city and Fuzuli region to a new level are expanding. We can say that as the Fuzuli city develops, it performs important functions in the revival of Karabakh and the acceleration of its integration at the regional and international level.

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