



LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS FOR GUARANTEEING THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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Abstract

The article examines the normative-legal and institutional reforms implemented in the Republic of Uzbekistan during 2020–2025 aimed at improving the social protection system for persons with disabilities. The analysis emphasizes the significance of the Law “On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” and its subsequent amendments, as well as constitutional guarantees of a social state designed to protect vulnerable segments of the population. The establishment of the National Agency for Social Protection and the “Inson” social service centers in 2023 is highlighted as a key step in enhancing the accessibility and quality of social services by bringing them closer to citizens. The article further discusses the digitalization of the disability assessment process, the introduction of the “IHMA enb” system, and the standardization of medical examinations, which reduced processing time and increased transparency. Strengthened monitoring and control mechanisms, including the activities of the Republican medical-social expert commission, are evaluated as important measures to reduce errors in disability determination. The modernization of rehabilitation and prosthetic-orthopedic services, the expansion of rehabilitation centers, the implementation of individual rehabilitation programs, and the voucher-based provision of technical aids are also analyzed. The conclusion indicates that reforms significantly enhanced the effectiveness of social protection, while emphasizing the need for continued development of monitoring, professional training for social workers, and public oversight.

Keywords: Persons with disabilities, social protection, normative-legal framework, rehabilitation, prosthetic-orthopedic provision, “Inson” center, digitalization, monitoring, legal guarantees, administrative liability.



Introduction

In recent years, the social protection system in the Republic of Uzbekistan, in particular the issue of supporting persons with disabilities, has become one of the priority areas of state policy. This area serves not only the principles of social justice and sustainable development, but also the provision of human rights and freedoms. The idea of “for the sake of human dignity” occupies a central place in the social policy of our country and is aimed at improving the quality of life of citizens, making the social protection system more effective, and ensuring the integration of groups in need of social protection. In this regard, one of the urgent tasks is to modernize the system of legal guarantees, social support, rehabilitation, and prosthetic and orthopedic services for persons with disabilities.

The Republic of Uzbekistan has adopted a number of regulatory legal acts to protect the rights and interests of persons with disabilities. Among these documents, the Constitution and the Law “On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” stand out as the most important legal framework. The new Constitution strengthens the principle of a social state and defines the protection of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, as a priority area of state policy. Article 14 of the Constitution provides for the guarantee of human rights and freedoms, the organization of social security on a legal basis, and the establishment of benefits only within the framework of the law. Article 46 specifically mentions the need to create additional conditions for persons with disabilities and the issue of improving legislation to ensure their rights. These provisions confirm that the state's social policy is based on the principles of humanity and justice.

Main part

1. Improvement of the regulatory framework.

The Law “On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”, adopted on October 15, 2020, is one of the main regulatory legal acts on the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. This document is based on the principles of dignity, independence, freedom of choice, non-discrimination and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities. The law strengthens the rights of persons with disabilities to education, healthcare, labor, participation in political and social life, and establishes the procedure for providing them with a social protection system, rehabilitation and habilitation processes, and prosthetic and orthopedic devices. As a result of the



adoption of this document, the system of social guarantees for persons with disabilities has been further strengthened and their equal rights in society have been strengthened.

Amendments and additions were made to this law by Law No. O'RQ-955, adopted in 2024. These amendments provide for the creation of additional conditions for persons with disabilities to access justice, participate in elections and be elected, participate in referendums, and expand their opportunities for education. In addition, convenient forms of communication with persons with disabilities and standards for adapting social infrastructure facilities have been established. This serves as an important legal basis for the formation of an inclusive society.

2. Institutional reforms and social services system.

One of the important areas of modernization of the social protection system was the creation of a mechanism for effective management and control of the process of providing social services and assistance. For this purpose, on June 1, 2023, by Presidential Decree No. PF-82, the National Agency for Social Protection was established under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The agency system organized the provision of services to citizens through the administrations of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, regions and Tashkent city, as well as district (city) "Inson" social service centers. These centers brought social assistance and services closer to the neighborhood, reducing the time and costs of citizens and improving the quality of service. Organizations and units providing social assistance to the agency system were integrated, which created a single management and control mechanism in the system.

The role of the neighborhood institution in the social protection system has also increased. The neighborhood is the main form of a public institution, allowing for early identification of the problems of the population and providing them with prompt assistance. Bringing social services closer to the community for people with disabilities and their families has created the opportunity to apply through "Inson" centers, social workers, the my.gov.uz portal, and family doctors. These processes have reduced service times and increased convenience for citizens..



3. Digitalization and transparency of the disability determination process.

The disability determination process has been fundamentally improved in recent years. In the traditional system, the human factor is significant, and delays in the work of medical and social expert commissions and the process of considering applications have been observed. The aim is to reduce these problems by digitizing the process and regulating it based on criteria.

Amendments were made to the Regulation on Disability Determination by Resolution No. 587 of September 16, 2025. The new “IHMA enb” system was introduced instead of the “Medical and Social Expertise” information system. The new system automatically generates patient information and reduces the time for entering information: the process, which previously took about 2 hours, has been reduced to 20–25 minutes in the new system. Examination criteria have also been developed, and it has been determined that only the examinations specified in the standard will be carried out free of charge and that disability determination will be carried out on the basis of uniform standards. This, in turn, will help prevent violations and uncertainties.

4. Strengthening the monitoring and control system.

In order to strengthen monitoring, a Republican Medical and Social Expert Commission was established under the Agency. The Commission consists of 7 specialists and reviews the results of the primary examination every month. This is of great importance in reducing cases of incorrect determination of disability and protecting the rights of citizens. If earlier the review rates were low, then in the new system this indicator has increased significantly and the results of the examination of an average of 5 thousand people are being reviewed every month.

The social inspection system has also been improved to increase the effectiveness of monitoring. Social inspection bodies have been empowered to identify violations in the provision of social services, eliminate them and ensure accountability. This mechanism plays a preventive role in improving the quality of social services and protecting the rights of citizens.

5. Reforms in the rehabilitation and prosthetics and orthopedics system.

The rehabilitation and prosthetics-orthopedic system for persons with disabilities has also been radically modernized. In accordance with Article 32 of the Law “On Rehabilitation and Habilitation of Persons with Disabilities”, 12 rehabilitation and



prosthetics centers operate throughout the republic. These centers comprehensively implement medical, social and professional rehabilitation measures, improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities. Since there are no centers in Bukhara and Syrdarya regions, citizens of these regions have the opportunity to receive treatment in centers in nearby regions. Work is ongoing to increase the capacity of the centers and introduce modern rehabilitation methods and technologies. An individual rehabilitation program for persons with disabilities has also been effectively implemented. In accordance with Article 33 of the Law, an individual rehabilitation program for a person with disabilities is developed on the basis of a medical and social examination. The program includes medical, social, professional and physical rehabilitation measures. The medical and social expert commission ensures the development of a program within 10 days after the determination of disability. In 2025, rehabilitation programs were formalized for 349 thousand people after the determination of disability. Of these, 317,170 people received social rehabilitation, more than 80 thousand people received vocational rehabilitation, and measures were taken to ensure their employment. These indicators indicate that the rehabilitation system is effective in medical, social and economic terms.

6. Provision of prosthetic and orthopedic devices and technical means.

The system for providing prosthetic and orthopedic devices and rehabilitation technical means has also been modernized. Article 34 of the Law stipulates that the state shall assist in the development of the creation and production of modern prosthetic and orthopedic devices and rehabilitation technical means. Previously, persons with disabilities had to stand in long queues and collect a lot of documents to receive a wheelchair or other technical means. Now the process is transparent, open and digitized, and a disabled person has the right to choose a suitable device for themselves. A voucher system has been introduced, allowing individuals to receive a device from a manufacturer of their choice. The process is also supported by information exchange through the Uzum market application.

If a need for a device is identified during the disability determination process, the conclusion of the medical and social expert commission is sent to the “Inson” center, and a voucher is formed in accordance with the price of the recommended product. Then the disabled person chooses the product that suits them. Rehabilitation equipment is scheduled to be delivered within 5 days, and prosthetic and orthopedic



devices within 45 days. The list of free devices has been expanded from 18 to 122. In 2025, people in need were provided with 191,562 devices, of which 131,676 are rehabilitation equipment, 59,886 are prosthetic and orthopedic devices.

According to the monitoring results, in 2,263 cases, devices were delivered later than the specified deadline, in 324 cases, poor-quality products were identified, and 312 were replaced within the warranty period. These cases indicate the need to strengthen measures aimed at improving the quality of social services and reducing violations.

7. Legal guarantees and international standards.

The Republic of Uzbekistan continues to integrate international norms on the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities into national legislation. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities aims to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy all human rights and freedoms without discrimination. The Convention was adopted in 2006 and entered into force in 2008, and establishes the rights of persons with disabilities to life, education, health care, work, and equal participation in political and social life. The Republic of Uzbekistan signed this convention in 2009 and ratified it in 2021. Ratification imposes obligations on our country to protect the rights of persons with disabilities in accordance with international standards.

Also, based on the Law No. URQ-1102 of December 17, 2025, new articles were introduced into the Code of Administrative Offenses for violations in the field of social services. Now, cases of non-compliance with legislative requirements or failure to provide social guarantees by entities providing social services, including the Agency and its system, will be subject to administrative liability. Social inspection bodies have the right to consider cases of administrative offenses and impose fines, which serves as a preventive mechanism for improving the quality of social services and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

Conclusion

In general, the reforms implemented in the field of social protection of persons with disabilities, disability determination and improvement of the rehabilitation system in the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2020–2025 significantly increased the effectiveness of the system. The regulatory framework was strengthened, and through the Law “On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” and amendments thereto, the rights of persons



with disabilities were expanded and the necessary conditions were created for their integration into society.

Institutional reforms, in particular, the National Agency for Social Protection and the system of “Inson” centers, increased the quality of service provision by bringing social services closer to the community and introducing a unified management mechanism. The digitalization of the disability determination process, the strengthening of the monitoring and control system played an important role in protecting the rights of citizens. Modernization of the rehabilitation and prosthetic and orthopedic services system served to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities.

At the same time, the problems encountered in practice indicate the need to further improve the system. In particular, further development of mechanisms for monitoring the processes of disability determination, rehabilitation and prosthetic and orthopedic provision, improving the skills of social workers, and strengthening public control are urgent issues. Strengthening administrative accountability mechanisms serves as an important legal guarantee in protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. In general, the regulatory legal acts and institutional reforms adopted in 2024–2025 have created a solid foundation for the sustainable protection of the rights and legitimate interests of persons with disabilities and require consistent continuation of reforms.

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