



Kazakhstan News Bulletin

Released weekly by the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the USA and Canada

www.kazakhembus.com

April 25, 2007

Vol. 7, No. 17

Special edition

Prime Minister Massimov Marks First 100 Days in Office, Stresses Team Approach, Focus on Real Issues

Karim Massimov, a well known young economic reformer was appointed the seventh Prime Minister of an independent Kazakhstan by President Nursultan Nazarbayev this past January 10.



Prime Minister Karim Massimov says his Government's work is result oriented.

One of the new Government's main tasks was set as bringing Kazakhstan into the group of the world's 50 most competitive nations. The first 100 days for Prime Minister Massimov in office have seen increased activity levels in all ministries and agencies and emphasis on solving real problems.

Mr. Massimov held his first press conference as Prime Minister on April 24, saying, "The distinctive trait of this Government has been its undertaking to resolve very specific issues. Many of those issues we have already resolved. Our Government works in such a way that people can see real results every day, week, month or quarter."

Responding to questions from reporters, Prime Minister Massimov outlined the Government's position on a number of timely issues.

He said Kazakhstan's potential participation in any Trans-Caspian pipeline will be determined solely by economic feasibility. "There is no political component here, only economic reasons. I believe any routes for energy transportation should benefit our people. If a route is profitable for our country and it is beneficial to ship [resources] that way, that's the direction the Government will be heading," the Prime Minister said.

He went on to say contracts for subsoil use in Kazakhstan will remain unchanged provided conditions they call for are met: "Our head of state has always stated clearly his position on the sanctity of contracts. If a contract is signed, and both sides, the government and a subsoil user, clearly abide by the conditions of the contract, it will not be reviewed."

At the same time, "if one side violates the contract, the other side, for example, the government has an opportunity to review these conditions. If a subsoil user does not fulfill his obligations, the government will take appropriate measures, all the way to revoking the license," the Prime Minister stressed.

He added the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources is currently reviewing the execution of contracts, and once this review is completed, the Government will “notify the public through the media about who such a process is being applied to.”

The Prime Minister also noted the Government intends to pay greater attention to developing the stock market. Each month, the Government will list certain amounts of shares in major state owned companies on the Kazakh stock exchange for sale to individuals. “We will create conditions for individuals to buy a share of a specific enterprise so that they can buy it and then sell it for profit. When more than half of our 15 million people own small packets of shares, they will be approaching the middle class and this will enhance stability in our society,” the Prime Minister explained.

The Government will actively pursue administrative reform seeking greater efficiency from state bodies, the improved prestige and competitiveness of the public service, and a reduction in corruption.

In this light, Prime Minister Massimov commented on plans to introduce a position of a Responsible Secretary in ministries: “This is no Kazakh invention; many countries have such a position under different names. A Responsible Secretary is going to be the highest administrative position in each ministry, this will not be a political position. A Responsible Secretary must be a professional and a specialist in his field. When governments or ministers change, the public service and public sector employees should feel comfortable the incoming minister won’t change an entire team. They should be confident they are working for the state, for stability.”

The Prime Minister further said: “We will create such conditions for people in the public service that it would be beneficial and prestigious to serve, that their salaries were adequate to their work and that they receive them in the open, without creating corruption.”

Prime Minister Massimov believes one of the most important results of the first 100 days of his Government is that it has become a unified team of single minded people seeking to do good for their nation: “I am very happy with the work of my colleagues, ministers and akims (governors and mayors). There is a new corporate spirit, a spirit of one team under the President. We want to do a lot for the nation.”

In conclusion, the Prime Minister said that in order to improve transparency of the Government’s operations and ensure broader access to information, members of the Cabinet will hold news media briefings on their activities weekly.

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