

# SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF GORNY BADAKHSAN

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**I**n January 2005, the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO) will mark its 80th anniversary as part of the Republic of Tajikistan: in historical terms it is not much—measured by individual lives, however, it is a lot. In the distant past

the Western Pamir (Shugnan, Rushan, Wahan, Garan and Ishkashim) consisted of small independent possessions ruled by hereditary potentates until in the mid-19th century the geopolitical interests of the British and Russian empires clashed in Cen-

tral Asia. In 1873, they signed an agreement on the West Pamirian borders under which Shugnan, Rushan, and Wahan were excluded from the sphere of influence of the Afghan emirate. In 1883, Afghan Emir Abdurahman Khan captured the western regions in violation of the earlier treaty on the inviolability of the borders along the River Panj. Russia had to use force to recapture its control over the territory.

In 1895, Russia and Britain signed a special agreement on the delimitation of spheres of influence in the Pamir. To the mutual satisfaction the sides drew the dividing line from Zor-Kul Lake along the Eastern Pamir and the River Panj. It was at the same time that Russia started the process of including the area in the empire. From that time on and until November 1918 supreme power in the region belonged to the military; after a revolution performed by soldiers, workers and hired agricultural laborers power was transferred to the newly created Revolutionary Committee, the first body of Soviet power in Gorny Badakhshan.<sup>1</sup> The Pamir

<sup>1</sup> See: M. Shergaziev, S.A. Radjabov, "Sozdanie i razvitiye sovetskoy gosudarstvennosti v Gorno-Badakhshanskoj avtonomnoy oblasti," in: *Ocherki po istorii Sovetskogo Badakhshana*, Irfon Publishers, Dushanbe, 1981, p. 103.

was made part of the Turkestan Autonomous Republic as an independent region (okrug) administered directly by the government of the autonomous Soviet socialist republic. As a result of ethnic and territorial delineation in Central Asia Gorny Badakhshan was made an autonomous region within the newly formed Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. This was done in recognition of the local people's ethnic specifics. Today its ethnic groups are living in the area that has all features typical of a self-administering region: it is separated from the rest of the republic; its economy is highly specific; it has its own tongues, traditions of everyday life, religion (Shi'a Islam), etc. There is a certain number of Kyrgyz living there, too. According to the Pamir Languages Department of the Institute of the Humanities, Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan, there are nine languages and dialects in the Pamir all belonging to the old-Iranian linguistic groups.

It was in 1955 that the present administrative and territorial system took shape. Art 81 of the 1994 Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan describes the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region as an inalienable part of the Republic of Tajikistan. This reconfirmed the area's autonomous status.

## Local Economy Today

During its nearly 80 years of existence as an autonomous region Gorny Badakhshan has covered a long historical road: from a feudal-patriarchal society to an agrarian-industrial area with a relatively developed social infrastructure, a system of cultural, educational and research institutions. The same fully applies to the Republic of Tajikistan. These achievements are well known and there is no need to dwell on them here. It is much more important to identify the region's place in the country's social and economic development pattern and to describe the problems it will have to address in the foreseeable future.

The region occupies 44.9 percent of the country's total territory; it possesses 25 percent of the water resources and the same share of potentially usable hydropower resources; it also has 2.3 percent of the total cultivated area and is populated by 3.3 percent of the country's total population. At the same time, in 1996-2002 the region's share in the total volume of capital investments in the republic's national economy was 4.0 percent; in capital funds, 1.2 percent; in retail trade, 1.3 percent; in paid services, 0.9 percent; in industrial production in 2001, 0.55 percent; in the aggregate agricultural production, 1.8 percent; the share of gainfully employed population was 1.5 percent.<sup>2</sup> If we take into account the region's population size as related to the republic's total population we can see that the region produces 1.8 times less agricultural produce and nearly 6 times less industrial products.

<sup>2</sup> Calculations are based on: *Statisticheskij ezhegodnik Respubliki Tajikistan za 2001 g. Goskomstatistiki Respubliki Tajikistan*, Dushanbe, 2002, pp. 23, 195, 220, 222, 239, 243, 300, 330; *Narodnaia gazeta*, 19 February, 2003.

It is lagging behind for objective and subjective reasons: it is far removed from the valleys; until quite recently it was practically isolated from the rest of the country for half a year. In the past the valleys were treated as a priority. So far, the natural resources of the mountainous areas that are very hard to achieve remain unknown and therefore, undeveloped. The natural conditions there are much harsher than in other mountainous areas—they can be described as extreme especially if compared with the valleys. This climate is much more demanding when it comes to labor expenditure, the local economy requires much more investments; production there is less efficient, therefore the region's development is slow; to successfully develop it should receive subsidies, tax and customs privileges while the local people should enjoy more social security, etc.

In the last 10 years the republic's government passed several decisions designed to stabilize the region's sociopolitical and socioeconomic development; it has offered favorable conditions to the international humanitarian programs active in the area such as the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), the Eurasia Foundation, the Counterpart Consortium, the Ministry for Economic Development of Germany, etc.

Much is done to develop transport: the preliminary variant of the Kulob-Zigar highway ended the area's isolation from the country's southern parts that lasted six months every year; in the future as soon as the Murgab-the Kul'ma Pass is commissioned and joined with the international Karakorum highway the region and the republic will acquire access to the neighboring countries to further develop its economic and trade contacts.

In the 1990s, the countryside economy was reformed: unprofitable farms were liquidated while their cattle and lands were transferred for long-term lease to local peasants. This preserved agriculture in the area and made it possible to increase its productivity. The private farms are doing well: in 1991-2002 the gross yield of grain increased by 3.3 times; potatoes, by 2.4 times; vegetables, by 2.5 times; melons and watermelons, by 3.0 times. Successes in cattle breeding are less spectacular, yet where per capita meat production is concerned in 2001 the region outstripped the republic by 1.2 times (10.1 kg in the region and 4.7 kg in Tajikistan as a whole), milk, by 1.5 times; eggs, by 3.1 times; wool, by 2.8 times, etc. At the same time, the local demand for the basic foodstuffs is met on average by 70 percent (with the exception of potatoes). Flour, vegetables, melons and watermelons, etc. should be brought in great quantities from the valleys. The situation is strange: in 2001 the region produced 0.6 kg of melons and watermelons per capita even though there are idle lands while the local people would like to consume more of these products.

The economic reforms crippled the local industry: while in 1990 it gave jobs to 2.9 thou and produced goods to the total sum of 24,336 rubles, in 2001, only 974 people were engaged in industrial production (there are doubts that they really worked in industry) who produced goods to the total sum of 10,386 thou somoni (the local currency). It was 4.6 persons per 1,000 of population working in industry while per capita production reached 49.07 somoni (the corresponding average figures for the republic as a whole: 14.0 persons and 298.51 somoni—the gap is 3.0 and 6.1 times).

Some 10 to 12 years ago the region had varied industries (light, food, and stone working) as well as construction materials industry; it also produced electric power. Today, its industry is limited to the Gorno-Badakhshan network area consisting mainly of small hydropower stations responsible for two-thirds of the region's industrial output. By 2002, many of the local factories had been closed or stood idle. The Khorugh garment factor that employed 646 people in 1990 who produced 6,002 thou ruble-worth of products (\$8,418) in 2001 employed 102 who produced 14 thou somoni-worth of products. The meat-packing and milk factory that had employed 120 in 1990 and turned out products to the total sum of 4,484 thou rubles (\$6,289) in 2001 gave work to 18 people who produced 20.0 thou somoni-worth of products. The concrete product plant in Khorugh had hired 143 people in 1990 and produced 2.028 thou ruble-worth of products (\$2,844.3); in 2001 the plant was closed. The local bakery, the Garant enterprise, the services in the district centers, the poultry farm in the village of Buni, and many other enterprises are struggling for survival. In the past, the region's industry (with the exception of garment factory and the stone working enterprises) had a stable local demand and worked on raw materials and semi-finished products brought from other parts of the republic. The local businessmen had failed to revive the old contacts, therefore local enterprises are either idle or were closed down altogether. This

raises a natural question: how can local industry be developed in the absence of means to open new or, at least, to preserve the old enterprises?

The low economic development level, low prestige of industrial labor because of low wages frightened away many of those who used to work in industry; this created an employment crisis. In the last 11 years the local population increased at a faster pace than elsewhere in the republic: the civil war created large numbers of migrants. Despite the fact that in 1991-2001 the size of able-bodied population increased by more than 1.4 times the number of those working in the local economy dropped by 78.2 percent (20.4 thou). This naturally created unemployment. By the early 2002, there were 15.2 thou of officially registered unemployed in the Pamir<sup>3</sup> (35.4 percent of the total number of unemployed in the republic). While in the republic in the last five years the number of unemployed dropped, in the region it doubled; over 65 percent of the unemployed are young people between 18 and 29. Unemployment is materially and morally humiliating; it is the hardest test and the gravest illness caused by the market economy.

Young and middle-aged people leave their homes and the republic in search of employment and are exposed to the hardships of the labor immigrants' lot. There is the opinion that labor migration may alleviate the problem and relieve pressure on the local labor market; much hopes are pinned on training in the countries where Tajiks are working and on the money they send back home that can be used for investments in the national economy, etc. One cannot deny that this is true—many families are living on the money they receive from abroad, yet the migrants themselves sacrifice a lot, even lives. They exchange life at home for hard, unskilled labor, adverse living conditions; they are underpaid and often not paid at all, they risk their lives. In short, the unorganized labor migrants are the most vulnerable and socially unprotected category of workers. As for the money they manage to mail back home no matter how large are the sums they are inevitably 8 to 10 times less than the cost of what they created by their labor. The migrant workers contribute mainly to the prosperity of the host country. It seems that Tajikistan will profit much more if it creates jobs closer at home and uses its human capital rather than be satisfied with short-term advantages.

The region is rich in natural resources and raw materials. If developed they will boost its own development and economic advance of the republic as a whole.

### Agricultural Lands

According to the Tajikgiprozem Institute the region's agricultural land potential is 10.5 thou hectares (that can be used to grow grain, potatoes, vegetables, etc.), which is a lot in this mountainous country where the irrigated arable lands cover an area of 15.7 thou hectares.<sup>4</sup> There are about 2.3 thou hectares suitable for industrial plantations of apricots, walnuts, mulberry, and pomegranates. According to the Regional Amelioration Association, certain measures designed to improve the region's water economy and strengthen river banks will produce up to 3.5 to 4.5 thou hectares of arable land in the next few years<sup>5</sup> (of which 500 hectares will be found in the Darvoz District; 1,000 hectares in the Bartang Valley; about 800 hectares in the Roshtkala District; over 200 hectares, in the Ishkashim District, etc.). There is a possibility to create meadows and irrigated pastures over 5.0 thou hectares in the Murgab District that will be 4 to 5 times more productive than the already existing ones.

In the nearest future it is planned to develop, together with the AKF's Mountain Societies Development and Support Program (MSDSP), over 1,000 hectares of arable lands in the Bartang Valley. With an average grain yield of 15.0 metric centners per 1 hectare of irrigated lands the total grain yield may increase by 1.5 thou tons. Potato production may show the greatest increase: there is the opinion that the region can produce 35 to 40.0 thou tons or even more (in 2001 the region produced

<sup>3</sup> See: *Statezhgodnik Respubliki Tajikistan*, Dushanbe, 2002, p. 74.

<sup>4</sup> See: *Materialy Strategicheskogo seminara po ustoychivomu razvitiyu Tajikskogo Pamira*, Khorugh, 21-24 October, 2002.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem* (contribution by D.S. Anoiatshoev).

27.0 thou tons). The following districts have the most favorable conditions for growing potatoes: Ishkashim and parts of the Shugnan, Roshtkala and Rushan districts. In the future, the region will cover the local needs and will be able to sell it to the republic's southern parts fresh and processed into chips and other products.

The available lands should be rationally used: in 2001 over 5.1 thou hectares of arable land remained idle for want of diesel fuel, spare parts for pumping stations, seeds, and for other reasons.<sup>6</sup> Practically no fertilizers are currently used which cuts down the yield. In Soviet times, the land annually received 3.5-4.0 thou tons of mineral and 10-12 thou tons of organic fertilizers; the corresponding figures are: less than 900 tons of mineral and 5-7 times less organic fertilizers. This is wrong in the context of lack of arable land and infertility of local soils.

### ***Water Resources: The Present State and Hopes for the Future***

Water and hydropower resources are even less rationally used than the land. In averagely damp years these resources amount to 409 c m (over 25 percent than across the country). The main water resources concentrated in the River Panj and its numerous large and small tributaries are practically untapped. Today, the region used less than 1 percent of its water flow formed on its territory. About 90 percent is used for irrigation; the rest is consumed by industry and communal services. More rational use of the local water resources can be achieved by extending irrigated territories and developing industries; the extremely pure water made of melted snow and obtained from springs can be sold as drinking water. Middle Eastern countries badly need such water and are prepared to pay for it more than for oil and oil products: good customers can and should be found.

Hydropower resources are the region's main wealth: their potential is 8.23 million kW (25.7 percent of the republic's total reserves) and 4.9 million kW technically possible to exploit (25.4 percent of similar resources across the country). Today they remain untapped: the overall installed capacity of the region's electric power stations do not exceed 54.0 thou kW (1.2 percent of the similar index for the republic) of which 29.0 thou kW are produced by the hydroelectric power stations (0.6 percent of technically possible) and 25.0 thou kW by the diesel electric power stations. Since 1992 the latter have been idle for want of fuel.

Today, a superficial observer may accuse those who planned in the past diesel electric power stations for the area abounding in hydropower resources of thoughtlessness, yet there were reasons for this. First, capital investments have been limited at all times: diesel stations are much less capital-consuming per unit of commissioned capacities than hydroelectric power stations. Second, they were much less time-consuming than the hydroelectric power stations; third, petrol products and transportation costs were very low. It is true that the hydroelectric power stations are paid off swiftly, yet in the past people concentrated on the time needed for construction. Today, because of lack of diesel fuel the diesel electric stations are idle: time regained turned out to be money lost.

Between 1994 and 2001 the autonomous region received 21 micro hydroelectric power stations that all together produce 1,500 kW; the first two aggregates of the Pamir HEPS-1 with an overall capacity of 14.0 thou kW were also commissioned.

Still, power production in the region trails behind the average republican level: in 2001 all electric power stations produced 134 million kW/h (0.93 percent of the republican total); per capita production was 639 kW/h (3.6 times below the country's average).<sup>7</sup> This is not enough and slows down the region's economic development. Indeed, the region has no alternative power sources (coal, gas, diesel fuel, tim-

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>7</sup> Calculated from: *Promyshlennost Respubliki Tajikistan. Statsbornik*, Goskomstatistiki Respubliki Tajikistan, Dushanbe, 2002, p. 63; *Statezhagodnik Respubliki Tajikistan*, pp. 23, 205.

ber, etc.) while over 40 percent of its settlements receive no electricity in winter; 10 percent of them are deprived of electricity all year round even though there are power lines connecting them with sources of electric power. People use kerosene lamps or even splinter torches: in the 21st century they have to return to distant past. Recently, when there was enough electric power for the entire region while the total population strength was much lower than today large and average settlements enjoyed the same communal services as towns (they lacked only central heating, hot water supply and sewage). Today, for want of electric power especially in spring and fall to cook and to heat their houses people have to fell trees in small groves and shrubs that prevent soil from erosion. They even have to fell fruit and decorative trees. In the Murgab District they uproot winter fat, the main forage for domestic and wild animals. There is information that it has nearly disappeared on the area of 35 to 50 km around settlements. In Eastern Pamir people heat their houses the year round; one family needs up to 126 c m of winter fat the heating value of which is low.<sup>8</sup>

According to the Pamir Biological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan, one hectare of winter fat provides from 0.3 to 0.5 centners of dry winter fat; it will take from 5 to 8 years (depending on the altitude) to restore the damaged vegetation. What is more, this felling causes desertification and damages the rather poor meadows of the Murgan District and soil, which is eroded while lands are degrading.

In 2002, the government of Tajikistan signed an agreement with the International Financial Corporation and the ACTED, a French NGO, on setting up a private company in the autonomous region to exploit and develop its electric power system. In the nearest years construction of a water outlet of Ashil-Kul Lake will begin; two aggregates (14.0 thou kW each) will be commissioned at the Pamir-1 Hydropower Station. In 2001, there were 4,621 kW/h of electric power produced per 1 thou kW of the capacity of the hydroelectric powers stations. If by late 2007 the republic receives 14.0 thou kW more it will produce 65.0 million kW/h more and the total amount of locally produced electric power will reach the figure of 200.0 million kW/h. In the same period population will increase at least by 1.2 percent to reach the figure of about 226.3 thou. Per capita production of electric power will be 878 kW/h, that is, 37.4 percent more than today. This will hardly improve power supply to the region's economic spheres and their development. To completely meet the local requirements in electric power in the foreseeable future (15 to 20 years) the region needs Pamir-2 and Pamir-3 hydropower stations with an overall capacity of 41 thou kW as well as the Rog hydropower station in the Vanch District with a capacity of 14 thou kW. Since the settlements are scattered across vast areas and separated by long distances the region needs small and micro hydropower stations; the latter are produced by the Tajiktekstil' mash Plant in Dushanbe; to overcome the region's isolation where its steady power supply is concerned it should be linked with the Dushanbe-Garm power system. This requires a 110 kV power line between Darvoz-Vanch, Khorugh-Rushan and, in the distant future, the 110 kV Pamir hydropower stations-Murgab line 350 km long so that to join the Murgab District to the system. The projects that are capital- and labor-consuming will be quickly repaid. The region has two coal deposits (Kurtekinskoe in the Murgab District and Ravnobskoe in the Darvoz District). The poor quality of the former prevents its development while the latter demands more detailed prospecting so that to identify the most promising stretches, and building roads.

### Mineral Resources

The Pamir is Tajikistan's mineral and raw-material treasure-trove of resources. Today, according to geological assessments there are about 700 ore outcrops and about 1,000 stretches of non-metallic materials: building materials, precious, semi-precious, and trim stones. Some of the ore outcrops have been already geologically studied and found rich; there are completed feasibility studies for them; they have been registered by the State Commission for Mineral Resources for industrial development. In fact, the Pamir is the least studied region: out of a wide range of ore and non-metallic deposits only the deposits of

<sup>8</sup> See: *Materialy Strategicheskogo seminara po ustoychivomu razvitiu Tajikskogo Pamira* (contribution by A. Navruzshoev).

boron, piezooptical quartz, sodium salt, construction materials, noble, facing and semi-precious stones and mineral waters have been studied and registered for further use. In all, 18 deposits have been registered of which 7 are periodically used (construction sand, mineral lazurite, spinel, marble, rock salt, mineral waters and piezoquartz). Today, geological prospecting for precious and semi-precious stones is underway. Unfortunately, mining in the Pamir is limited to the above.

Geological prospecting in the region is carried out by the Pamir Geological Expedition of the Republican Geological Administration that will soon mark its 50th anniversary and the Pamirquartzsamotsvety Expedition of the Ministry of Industry of Tajikistan that between 1992 and 2000 had remained idle for want of funding; later it started receiving 50 to 60 thousand somoni, an inadequate sum that could scarcely pay for the managerial team and a museum. To keep the expedition staff together and to pay wages the managers had to build roads, tunnels, etc.

The Pamirquartzsamotsvety Expedition, one of the largest in the republic, founded in 1939 managed to preserve its industrial capacities during the civil war and to produce goods at least at 40 percent level of 1990. It is engaged in prospecting for semi-precious stones across the country. In 1996, it served as the basis for the State Committee for Precious and Semi-precious Stones at the republic's government; in mid-1997 and later incompetent people were appointed the committee's managers under whose guidance geological prospecting discontinued, industrial production stopped, the administrative building together with the expedition's laboratories were lost. Today, a handful of managers and geologists rent floor space for which they cannot pay anyway. They expect eviction any day and have no time to think about geological prospecting.

Even though we obviously do not know enough about the Pamir our scanty knowledge of its geology speaks about great prospects: mining and processing along with hydroelectric power production can become the main economic branches. Geologically the region's territory is divided into six areas, each with its specific mineral deposits. For example, potential gold reserves of the Kalai-Khumbskiy area amount to about 100 tons. The same area is rich in coal, marble, jasper, ophite, ophicalcite, serpentinite, etc. The Vanch area is rich in high-grade marble and rock crystal, considerable amounts of copper, nickel, cobalt and platinum in the Gumastskiy mountain massive; molybdenum, gallium and rhenium in the Sungatskiy massive. They are preliminary estimated as having industrial prospects. Iron deposits and manifestations were discovered in Jangal, Potov, Sel, Tekharv, Van-Van, and elsewhere in the same area. The Rushan area is rich in wolfram, copper, cobalt, gold (the Ikar field), and there are rich gold deposits and manifestations in Khuf, Khujand, Iakhzev; iron (Barch) and other minerals. The Ishkashim area is rich in precious stones: rubies, spinel, humite, lazurite, garnet, ceramic raw materials, etc. The Murgab District has two large deposits: Alichur and Rangkul. It was long ago that considerable deposits of boron were discovered in the former (Ak-Arkhar) registered during Soviet times; silver (Akdjilga, Kara-Djilga, and Mardjonai), tin (Trezubets), copper, lithium, wolfram, etc. The Rangkul area has gold deposits in Rangkul, tin and copper in Zarechnoe; tantalum and niobium in Iasnogorskoe, precious and semi-precious stones (rubies, tourmaline, topaz, scapolite, in Snezhnoe and Kukurt), etc. There are traces of industrial diamonds—further prospecting and laboratory tests are required.

This concise geological survey shows that the Pamir is worth of much more attention while geological prospecting at the most promising deposits should receive better funding. In this case alone the region may develop from the country's potential into its real treasure-trove.

Today, industrial extraction of marble, serpentinites, trim and semi-precious stones is the easiest and most promising project. The region has certain processing capacities and skilled workers. For example, a North Pamir enterprise Khrustal (Crystal) operates on the basis of the Dashtak marble deposits in the Vanch District. In Soviet times, it produced several thousand sq m of trim, polished and mosaic plates, gravestones, vases and chandeliers of all types, marble aggregate, etc., that were readily bought. In 2001, the same enterprise hired 10 workers who produced 8.0 thousand somoni-worth of goods. Lack of electric power for 5 to 6 months a year is responsible for this poor performance; the enterprise still has several diesel power stations with a total capacity of 1,000 kW, yet it has no fuel for them; it also needs diamond instruments to process marble and produce other goods. The same can be said about other recently quite successful enterprises. La'l, a factory in the village of Porshnev during Soviet times supplied the country

with jewelry made of precious and semi-precious stones readily bought by even the choosiest of clients. Today the factory struggles for survival and badly needs high-grade stones to continue functioning. In 2001, it hired 31 people who produced goods to the sum of 20 thou somoni.

If working steadily Khrustal today can produce at least up to 100 thou sq m of marble facing slabs (not less than \$25 per 1 sq m); 10.0 thou sq m of marble mosaic plates (that will cost \$150 per 1 sq m); 600 c m of blocks for monuments and sculptures (\$200 per 1 c m); 10.0 thou tons of marble aggregate as well as consumer goods to the total sum of \$4,270 thou (not less than 12 million somoni). In other words, with the shortages mentioned above removed, the region will be able to improve its economy at the expense of stone processing alone.

Taking into account a demand for wolfram, molybdenum, tin, gallium, cobalt, nickel, platinum and other metals and the constantly rising prices on them and granted the local reserves are workable one can expect that foreign investments will appear. Neither Tajikistan nor the autonomous region have enough money, machines and technologies to set up mining and processing enterprises. The country and the region however have unskilled workers in abundance to be employed after adequate training. In the foreseeable future this and hydropower production should be treated as priorities. The rich reserves of construction materials can be used to produce bricks, lime, asbestos, cement, to obtain granite, etc.

### Recreation Potentials

Local nature offers unlimited possibilities for a wide-scale recreation network of a republican and even international importance: recreation and tourist zones can be organized; the mountainous region can attract alpinists; the air and mineral waters can be used for treatment and for health maintenance. There are numerous thermal and mineral waters, glaciers, lakes, alpine and sub-alpine meadows, natural and historical monuments. Today, the region has no sanatoria or tourist bases. For false reasons the region is closed to foreigners and even to Tajiks from other areas. This deprives the local people of possible incomes and potential jobs: one tourist creates two or three jobs. An adequate recreation network requires money, yet to start the ball rolling it is advisable to look for sponsors among foreign and local businessmen.

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Obviously, to rescue the autonomous region from the deep crisis and to improve the local standards of living it is necessary to adopt a program of the region's socioeconomic development for the next 15 years. It should describe the following concrete steps: development of agriculture and enumeration of lands to be developed and irrigated as well as irrigation projects by districts; improvement of the fuel and energy sphere (small, average and micro hydroelectric power stations and joining the country's energy system); industrial upsurge (enumeration of priorities in mining and processing); more energetic geological prospecting of deposits of rare, non-ferrous, and noble metals and their industrial development; wider contacts with the southern regions and neighbors; development of social infrastructure and of priority spheres (tourism, alpinism, sanatoria and tourist bases).

Money is the main stumbling block—the republic and the autonomous region need cooperation of foreign investors and international charity foundations.

One should say that at one time the area was made an autonomous region precisely because this status helped develop it and let it catch up with the rest of the country. Unfortunately, this has not happened so far.