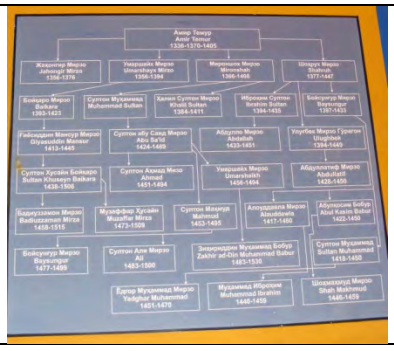
I recently had the opportunity to visit Uzbekistan as a guest of the IKA. I would like to thank everyone who went out of their way to make this an unforgettable experience. The hospitality and friendship is amazing. For the first time I had enough time to experience the country through the eyes of a tourist. Both Tashkent and Samarkand are amazing cities rich with culture and heritage.

I attended a meeting at the IKA headquarters with the IKA president and General Secretary. The IKA office is really a place that we can all be proud of. The newly built facility adjacent to the main building includes a Kurash training mat, fully equipped gym, indoor swimming pool and an excellent conference facility. The next stage that should hopefully be completed later this year comprises of a hotel that can host athletes, coaches, officials and other guests. The vision for this venue is a permanent world class international training center for Kurash coaches, players, referees and officials.

During my meeting with Mr. Yusupov we discussed the difficulties African countries have regarding training facilities and clothing for Kurash and the high cost implications during the hosting of African Kurash Championships. Also the logistical problems regarding travel costs on the African continent. With more than 50 countries on the African continent and Kurash only being practiced officially and actively in around 18 African countries, the development potential for Kurash is enormous.

The IKA promised to supply Kurash clothing (Yakhtak) to countries, starting off with Congo where the 2012 African Championships will be held. Import duties and logistics at the port of entry will be the responsibility of the receiving country. All Federations in need off Yakhtak must please supply to me the correct contact details and delivery address to which the equipment must be sent as soon as possible. Also indicate the sizes and quantities needed. The Yakhtak will be sourced from Pakistan. Additionally any federation who would like to send coaches, referees or players for training to Uzbekistan will be catered for by the IKA. Travel costs are for your own account, but local costs in Uzbekistan will be covered by the IKA.

I attended two training sessions and one Kurash national youth tournament during my visit. I was impressed with the facilities available in the many multisport indoor sport stadiums in all the cities that I visited. The Uzbeks are fortunate to receive all this support towards sport in general from their government. The development of the youth through sport is a priority in Uzbekistan. The dedication and spirit with which the children train, is wonderful to see. There are more than 50 Kurash training venues in Tashkent alone.