

---

The Minister warmly greeted the guests and expressed his pleasure at seeing them. He hailed the visit of the head of one of the famous universities in the world, Georgia State University, to Azerbaijan and estimated that visit as a significant event in the history of education of Azerbaijan. He highlighted the visit of the guests coincided with the 20th anniversary of state independence of Azerbaijan and gave information on achievements gained by Azerbaijan over the past years, integration of our country into the European and world community, establishment of the national education system, and on steps taken to strengthen its logistical base and other successes. Moreover, the Minister spoke on the development of the higher-education area in the country and participation of universities in the different international programmes. Noting 20 years ago there was no private university in Azerbaijan, the Minister underlined, today, there are 15 private universities operating in the country. He also highly praised the visit of the head of Georgia State University to our country, who accepted the invitation of University of Azerbaijan, in terms of the cooperation of universities.

Misir Mardanov said that Azerbaijan State Oil Academy, University of Azerbaijan and University of Odlar Yurdu collaborated with the Georgia State University. He touched upon the major contribution made by Prof. Bijan Fazlollahi to establish the cooperation between University of Azerbaijan and Georgia State University.

Next, the Minister expressed his belief that the visit of guests to Azerbaijan and meetings, which they will hold, will contribute to the expansion of international relations of universities of Azerbaijan and will impact on their further development. He expressed his hope that relations with the Georgia State University will further develop, and our universities will benefit from its experience. Mr. Mardanov also expressed his readiness to render a necessary help regarding issues arising from the visit schedule and said that this meeting will contribute to the development of educational ties between two countries.

President of Georgia State University, Mark Becker thanked the Minister for the warm welcome and given information. He delivered his congratulations to the Minister on 20th anniversary of state independence of Azerbaijan and positively estimated steps taken and achievements gained in the education field.

Noting the importance of relations established with 3 universities of Azerbaijan, Mr. Becker expressed his hope for the development of cooperation and gaining even more achievements. Moreover, the guest talked on works done within the cooperation with University of Azerbaijan.

Talking on relations of Georgia State University, which is located in Atlanta, Georgia State, and is one of the leading research universities, with other universities in the world, Mr. Becker said that he wishes Azerbaijani youth will study at all levels of higher education at the university headed by him.

Prof. of Georgia State University Bijan Fazlollahi in his speech underlined the inter-university ties, which are successfully developed. He said that students studying within education programmes jointly implemented at the University of Azerbaijan will graduate in December of the current year, and estimated that fact as an important result of cooperation. He also talked about some problems occurred on marked programmes.

In its turn, Education Minister Misir Mardanov said that he is ready to render any support for the jointly implemented projects.