

Education Minister Misir Mardanov warmly greeted the guests, and noted the UNESCO is the closest partner of the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan, with whom the Ministry has a broad relationship. The Minister underlined the role of the President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, Goodwill Ambassador of UNESCO and ISESCO Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva in establishing close ties with the organization. Noting the cooperation with UNESCO is carried out mainly in eight directions, the Minister gave detailed information on each of them. At first, he spoke about the collaboration of 18 education institutions of Azerbaijan with education institutions of 35 countries worldwide within the UNESCO Associated Schools Project. According to him, currently, within the cooperation with UNESCO, at 2 higher-education institutions of the country were opened departments of the organization. He noted that one of these departments was opened at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and at Azerbaijan University of Languages.

Misir Mardanov noted the successful implementation of one of the most wide-ranging projects of UNESCO "Education for All," to which Azerbaijan has joined in 1998, and in which has been actively involved. In addition, he stressed the establishment of non-governmental organization Centre for Education Reforms Support and implementation of inclusive education with expertise advice and financial support from UNESCO.

Next, the Minister recalled an international conference entitled "UNESCO - Azerbaijan: Bridge to the Future" held in 2005 in Baku, and in which a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of education was signed. In addition, he stressed that by the initiative of the President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, Goodwill Ambassador of UNESCO and ISESCO, Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva in May 2008 in Baku was held a Regional Conference in Support of Literacy in the world with the participation of world-famous people and education experts.

Misir Mardanov added that, currently, the Ministry of Education and UNESCO jointly implementing Vocational Education Development Project in Azerbaijan. According to the Minister, the main goal of the project is to prepare curricula that meets current standards on two vocational special education, training manuals and textbooks. The Minister noted the role of the Director of the UNESCO Office in Moscow DendeB Badarch, as well as the permanent representative of Azerbaijan to UNESCO Eleonora Huseynova in successful implementation of marked activities and projects in Azerbaijan.

At the meeting, the Minister put forward some suggestions noting that there should be paid a great attention to the ICT field within the cooperation with UNESCO so the informatization of the education system is one of the issues on which the President keeps an attention. Noting the role and importance of ICT in the education field the Minister stressed the use of latest ICT in the learning process by the secondary school teachers as one of the important issues. He also noted the importance of projects jointly implemented with UNESCO to improve the ICT skills of teachers; relevant training courses held in Baku, expert support from UNESCO and the use of ICT in the education system of Azerbaijan. In addition, the Minister expressed confidence in a long-term and remarkably productive collaboration with UNESCO.

Janis Karklins thanked the Minister of Education Misir Mardanov for the warm welcome and detailed information about the done work. He gave information on the task assigned to him at the organization that he represented. Noting that ICT is one of the main areas of activity of UNESCO, the guest said that the organization is ready to render any assistance to Azerbaijan in this field. Janis Karklins estimated the improvement of ICT skills of teachers as one of the main tasks, and spoke about the work, implemented and planned projects of UNESCO in this area. The guest noted the importance of ICT in building a knowledge society and spoke about the rapid development of this sector, its role in the education and gained achievements.

Further, the sides exchanged views on the development of cooperation.