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The opening ceremony of the International Green STEAM Azerbaijan Festival was held on October 24. The event, organized within the STEAM Azerbaijan project, is supported by the Ministry of Science and Education of Azerbaijan and the COP29 Presidency.

The ceremony, held at the Baku Expo Centre, was attended by government officials, members of parliament, COP29 representatives, heads of higher education and scientific institutions, prominent public figures and other guests.

The ceremony began with the singing of the national anthem, followed by a video dedicated to the festival.

Speaking at the event, Minister of Science and Education Emin Amrullayev said that the festival was a significant and prestigious event in the field of education. He noted that the STEAM Azerbaijan project plays an important role in the country's education and that the main goal of STEAM education is to prepare the young generation for new challenges. At the end of his speech, the Minister wished the participants success.

For her part, senior UN climate change champion Nigar Arpadaray, who was present at the event, said that the focus on green technologies in the STEAM Festival on the eve of COP29 was important. She also stressed that climate change can be mitigated through the synergy potential of the STEAM educational method.

STEAM Azerbaijan project manager Igrar Nazarov said that more than 900 people from 244 teams, 146 of which represent 15 countries, including the UK, Turkey, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and the USA, are taking part in the final stage of the festival. The jury consisted of 17 members from 10 countries, including Denmark, Slovakia, Canada and Turkey. According to Nazarov, the festival will organise competitions and exhibitions in nine categories, covering topics such as "Green initiatives", "Green programming", "Hydrogen car racing", "Drone technology", "Our satellite", "Robot fighting", "engineers of the future and others.

Nazarov noted that the STEAM project currently covers 398 schools and 252,711

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students across the country, and more than 20 STEAM centres are already operational. It is also planned that the number of students participating in the project will reach 300,000 by 2026.

After the speeches, a video clip reflecting the preparation of the festival participants was presented, followed by a presentation of the teams. The opening ceremony ended with an artistic part.

The festival will take place on 24 and 25 October. During the two days, participants will also attend training sessions on climate change and sustainability organised by COP29 Azerbaijan experts.

The main goal of this year's festival is to promote STEAM learning, develop 21st century skills among students, identify creative individuals, and taking into account the holding of COP29 in Azerbaijan and the announcement of 2024 as the 'Year of Solidarity for a Green World', prepare innovative solutions and projects for environmental improvement, efficient use of water resources and alternative energy sources using STEAM-based approaches.