

---

Speaking at the opening of the event, Education Minister Misir Mardanov congratulated the attendees on 131 December / World Azerbaijanis Solidarity Day and the New Year, and wished them every success for the future.

The Minister talked about the care and attention provided by the national leader Heydar Aliyev for the development of sport stressing this tradition has successfully continued by President Ilham Aliyev. Noting the importance of decision made by General Assembly of the European Olympic Committee to hold the first 2015 European Olympic Games in Azerbaijan, the Minister connected that important event with a success achieved by the country in all areas, including in the sport field.

Noting the year 2012 will be remembered for many achievements of Azeri athletes, including success gained at XXX Summer Olympic Games, the Minister talked about the action plan approved by the Ministry of Education according to the relevant Order of the President on claiming 2012 - the Year of Sport. According to the Minister the competition was conducted in accordance with the action plan and relevant order of the Ministry. He added the goal of the competition was to evaluate the activity of coaches working at children-youth sport and chess schools, as well as identify and encourage talented athletes.

According to the Minister about 39 championships, zonal and qualifying competitions were held among sport and chess schools during the 2012. Moreover 70 trainings were organized in order to prepare for 11 republican tournaments, as well as international and national competitions. In 2012, pupils of these schools have won 557 medals, including 219 gold, 172 silver and 166 bronze medals in competitions held in the country and a total of 97 medals, including 55 gold, 17 silver and 25 bronze medals in the World and European championships and tournaments.

The Minister also gave information on works done within the State Program approved by the orders of the President to train 2108 high-level athletes, develop chess and football, and steps taking to organize chess teaching at schools. At the end, he congratulated the winners and wished them every success.

Next, the name of winners of Republican competition among sport and chess schools, coaches and athletes, organized in 12 nominations were announced and they were awarded diplomas and presents of the Ministry.

The event was attended by vice-president of National Olympic Committee Chingiz Huseynzade, Deputy Minister of Youth and Sport Ismayil Ismayilov, MP Adil Aliyev and vice-president of Azerbaijan Chess Federation Fajr Hasanov. In their speech, they talked about the care and attention paid by the President for the development of sport stressing achievements gained in this field over the past years, and congratulated the winners.