

Speaking at the opening event, President of SOCAR (State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic) Rovnag Abdullayev welcomed attendees and noted that this kind of meetings has become a tradition. Having underlined the care and attention paid to young people of the country, he said that the work with youth is one of the priority directions of the state policy. Mr. Abdullayev also noted the importance of state programmes for youth assumed by the government.

He underlined this year the selection of youth, who will study abroad within the Scholarship Programme of SOCAR, were implemented in a very strict way, congratulated the winners, and wished them a success.

Having talked on achievements of the purposeful policy implemented under the leadership of President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev over recent years, Mr. Abdullayev underlined the important role of SOCAR in these achievements. He said that based on the assignment of the President Ilham Aliyev SOCAR is implemented a variety of projects to prepare a high qualified personnel. Noting the foundation for works implemented in this direction was launched by the great leader Heydar Aliyev, Mr. Abdullayev informed that talented young Azerbaijanis have begun to send to the best universities of USSR from the beginning of 1970s.

Talking about big projects implemented by SOCAR in the Republic and foreign countries Mr. Abdullayev underlined the growing demand for highly qualified personnel. He gave information on Scholarship Programmes carried out by SOCAR over recent years, and noted that SOCAR has close ties with secondary schools, as well as provides a financial support for a range of activities and subject Olympiads. Moreover, the company also sponsors INEPO Environmental Protection International Project Olympiad, held in our country since 2007.

Having expressed his views on the establishment of Vocational Training Centre under SOCAR, Internal Scholarship Programme for students of Bachelor and Master's level of universities, and Scholarship Programme for Study Abroad, Mr. Abdullayev said that currently, graduates of prestigious universities of USA, France, Great Britain, Turkey, Germany, Norway, Russia and other countries are successfully working with young personnel of the company. He said that, since 2010 at SOCAR has organized Summer Internship Programme on a fee paid base to familiarize students with the production process, and help them to get acquainted with labor skills during their studies. He stressed the importance of these activities.

Next, Education Minister Misir Mardanov made a speech. He congratulated scholarship holders of SOCAR, and students, who will study this year abroad within the State programme for the Education of Young Azerbaijanis Abroad in 2007-2015. Mr. Mardanov has hailed the event noting the effectiveness of gathering together representatives of older, middle aged and younger generation, and thanked organizers, particularly, the president of SOCAR Mr. Abdullayev. The Minister said that young people of Azerbaijan are surrounded with care and attention, and talked about attainments of the policy implemented by the President and government of Azerbaijan in this direction. According to him, the construction works implemented in the country under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev are the result of "Contract of the Century" signed in 1994 and the oil factor plays an important role in the strong development of all areas of our lives. According to him, there has been implemented a deliberate policy in Azerbaijan to transform oil revenues into human capital over recent years.

Touching upon the history of sending Azerbaijani youth to study abroad the Minister noted that in 1919, in the period of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, 100 people were sent to universities of foreign countries. Reminding this process has been expanded in the 70s and 80s of the last century, during the leadership of great leader Heydar Aliyev, the Minister said that the number of students sending abroad has increased every year from 45 people to 1500. He said that, due to the implementation of State Programme for the Education of Young Azerbaijanis Abroad in 2007-2015 approved by President Ilham Aliyev the effectiveness of this work has been increased and more than 800 young people have been sent to prestigious universities of foreign countries within the programme. Noting part of them have completed their study and returned to the country, the Minister underlined 250 young people will be sent to abroad to study this year.

At the end of his speech the Minister gave advice to youth. He inspired them to represent the

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country abroad with dignity, actively bring the truth about Azerbaijan to the world, fulfil the mission of the ambassador of Azerbaijan in the places where they will live and at universities where they will study.

Students speaking at the event have expressed their gratitude to the President Ilham Aliyev for the care provided for them, and conditions created to reveal their potential, and promised to justify the trust that was put in them.

At the end of the meeting, questions of students have been answered, and discussed proposals put forward by them.