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The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan State Physical Culture and Sport Academy and British Council signed a protocol of intent on cooperation on December 6.

Participants in the event included Deputy Minister of Education Firudin Qurbanov, rector of the academy Fuad Hajiyev, British Council Azerbaijan Director Elizabeth White, chairman of Sport for Development Public Union Mehman Karimov, and representatives of several non-governmental organizations.

The event featured the screening of a short movie on assessment of TOPs program for creation of modern educational technology in physical education.

Deputy Minister of Education Firudin Qurbanov said key priorities in modern education include protection of physical and psychological health conditions of schoolchildren, improving training achievements through physical culture and sports. He said the project is implemented under the "State Strategy for Development of Education in the Republic of Azerbaijan". The deputy minister noted that the scope of TOPs program is broadening every year. "More than 320 physical education teachers as well as more than 100,000 schoolchildren representing 72 secondary schools will benefit from the project in the 2016-2017 academic year," said Firudin Qurbanov.

Rector of Azerbaijan State Physical Culture and Sport Academy Fuad Hajiyev said although the program now involves only graduates we plan to include TOPs methodology in the academy's curriculum in the years ahead.

British Council Azerbaijan Director Elizabeth White highlighted the organization's cooperation with the Ministry of Education. She said that launched in 2014, TOPs program was of special importance among joint projects.

The ceremony then featured the awarding of certificates and gifts to winners in "The best open class" and "The best sport festival" nominations.

State officials and guests then toured the academy, and viewed volunteer registration camp of the 4<sup>th</sup> Islamic Solidarity Games here.