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Deputy Minister of Education Firudin Gurbanov visited Brussels to attend the Global Education Meeting (GEM 2018), co-organized by UNESCO and the government of Belgium.

Held on December 3-5, GEM 2018 gathered more than 300 participants, including UN, UNESCO and EU officials, ministers and deputy ministers of education of UNESCO member states, representatives of UN agencies, international and regional organizations, and the private sector.

Speakers at the Ministerial Opening Session included Queen Mathilde of Belgium, UN Special Advocate for the Sustainable Development Goals, Stefania Giannini, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Inga Rhonda King, President of UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and Tibor Navracsics, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sports.

Deputy Minister of Education Firudin Gurbanov addressed the Ministerial Roundtable 2 to highlight Azerbaijan's experience in meeting Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4 – education).

Firudin Gurbanov said that "Achieving inclusive and quality education for all and promoting lifelong learning" (SDG 4) matches with the "State Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Azerbaijan", which was approved by the October 24, 2013 Order of the Azerbaijani President, in many areas. He said that by implementing reforms featured in the Strategy, the country made great strides in a number of areas.

Firudin Gurbanov drew the audience's attention to what has been done in the country to prepare new general education standards, ensure gender equality in education and improve inclusive education. The deputy minister said the "State Program for the Development of Inclusive Education for the Disabled in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2018-2024" was approved.

Firudin Gurbanov said that despite difficulties caused by the Armenian armed forces' occupation of Azerbaijani lands, the country's government is investing heavily in the education sector. He added that hundreds of schools have been built in recent years in order to ensure the right to education of children from IDP families. The deputy minister said more than 70 percent of schools in Azerbaijan have been reconstructed or repaired.

The event ended with the adoption of the Outcome Statement on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4).