

## **Report of “Human and Biosphere” Program of National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan for UNESCO**

“Human and Biosphere” Program of the National Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan for UNESCO has been operating for more than 50 years. The activities of the National Commission are regulated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Academy of Sciences, the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (APA), the Advisory Council consisting of independent experts and civil society representatives and coordinated by the APA.

During the reporting period, the Governments of Azerbaijan laid the ground for the creation of new Biosphere Reserves. In this regard, Azerbaijan and Germany signed documents on special agreement and financing of a project entitled "Support Program for Protected Areas of the Zagatala-Balakan Region of the Republic of Azerbaijan". According to the results of the tender process in Germany in November 2019, the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan held discussions with the participation of representatives of the winning company “GOPA Consultants” and international experts, followed by an agreement signed in April 2020 on the active phase of the project which was launched in July 2020.

The Zagatala-Balakan Biosphere Reserve, which will be established on the basis of the Zagatala State Nature Reserve, will promote ecotourism and local employment in the region, as well as contribute to the implementation of obligations under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

In addition, the Zagatala-Balakan Biosphere Reserve is planned to be included in the network of biosphere reserves within the framework of UNESCO's "Man and the Biosphere" program (MAB - UNESCO).

At the same time, at the end of each year, the National Commission organizes the publication of scholarly articles on the works of the Azerbaijan National Commission's MAB, based on the scientific results and practical recommendations obtained in the framework of research on sustainable development and environmental civilization. The 15th volume of this annual publication was published in 2020. The publication is managed by an international editorial board consisting of authoritative experts from different countries.

For the first time in the world, since 2015, training in the field of sustainable development management has been carried out at all three levels of higher education - bachelor's, master's and doctoral in Azerbaijan. In 2019, the APA also began to teach the subject of "Inclusive Development Management" in all majors, and in this regard, developed an original and the world's first curriculum and textbook.

The National Committee is closely involved in the planning and implementation of sustainable development of environment and areas of the liberated territories after the 44 Days Glorious War in connection with the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions.