

Narmin Rahimli's speech at the first session of Committee on Trade, Investment, Enterprise and Business Innovation organized by UNESCAP

Ladies and Gentleman,
Greetings from Azerbaijan!

I am Narmin Rahimli, Specialist of the Digital Economy Department of the Center for Coordination and Analysis of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR) under the Ministry of Economy.

It is a great pleasure to join this event today and present my Center and my country here.

Today I would like to give you brief information about the projects implemented in the field of Digital Economy in Azerbaijan. In recent years, significant work has been done in the field of digital economy in Azerbaijan. Our country's oil-focused economy is being diversified by creating new digital and tech-advanced opportunities. The development of the digital economy and society is a priority for Azerbaijan in line with the government's relevant national strategies and roadmaps. "National Strategy for Information and Communication Technologies for the Development of the Republic of Azerbaijan", "State Program for the Development of Communications and Information Technologies in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2005-2008", "Action Program for the formation of e-government in the Republic of Azerbaijan" are only a few examples of the projects implemented to accelerate digitalization in the country. Azerbaijan became the first country in the world to offer interested international entrepreneurs mobile residency (m-Residency) and the second, after Estonia, to offer electronic residency (e-Residency).

To strengthen the position of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the 4IR, and to carry out analyses and coordination of challenges, initiatives, strategies, and projects on the digital economy, the Center for Coordination and Analysis of the Fourth Industrial Revolution under the Ministry of Economy was established by Presidential Decree dated January 6, 2021.

Our Center also hosts the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Affiliated Centre in Azerbaijan and collaborates with the WEF on Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, Internet of Things and Urban Transformation, as well as Digital Trade.

Our Center is currently working on the preparation of the Digital Economy Strategy. In order to have a unified approach to the preparation of this Strategy the Working Group was established with the participation of representatives of relevant government agencies. The Digital Economy Strategy will be a document that will ensure the development of the overall digital economy in the country and will be an umbrella document that will include the vision of other components which will be necessary for the development of the digital economy. One of the points that will be reflected in the strategy is developing Digital Skills.

On the purpose of developing digital skills, I also want to talk about our ongoing project with European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and Strategeast called «IT Hubs». The project intends to train

students with various IT skills and to provide them with employment in international companies at the end of the course.

Moreover, one of our major projects is the establishment of smart industries in Azerbaijan and the preparation of smart readiness assessments in related fields.

Also, creating the Regulatory Sandboxes to use the 4th Industrial Revolution Technologies is one of the important goals ahead.

Our Center has formed and currently coordinates activities of the working groups on “Preparing the Digital Economy Strategy”, “The development of digital commerce” and “4IR technologies”. The tasks entrusted to C4IR within the Action Plan of the "Socio-economic Development Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2022-2026" were added to the agendas of these working groups.

And finally, C4IR Azerbaijan has developed a Digital Ecosystem Map of Azerbaijan which embraces the major tools and fields to be developed:

- Digital Infrastructure and Services Development;
- Financial Resources;
- Bridging Digital Divide and Skilled Human Resources;
- Laws and Regulations;
- Application of the 4IR Technologies;
- Cyber security and Data Flows;
- Digital Networking;

We cooperate with other countries in the fields such as the development of the digital economy, measurement of the digital economy, regulatory sandboxes, digital skills, as well as the application of 4IR Technologies in the local economy. Here I can see the representatives from different countries, and we would be glad to cooperate with you if you are also interested.

Thank you so much for listening to my speech!