Mahdzir: Malaysia TVET programmes leading in region

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Lee Choon Fai
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is at the forefront of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the Asia-Pacific region with three local vocational learning institutes accredited the Gold level.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid said the three institutes awarded the Asia-Pacific Accreditation and Certification Commission (APACC) were Politeknik Ungku Omar, Politeknik Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah, and Politeknik Sultan Ibrahim.

"This is a testimony of the quality of our TVET programmes which has gained international recognition in terms of standards that are comparable to other countries in the region," Mahdzir said at the Asia-Pacific Education and Training Conference (ACET) in Berjaya Times Square Hotel today.

Despite the international recognition, he said, people still perceive vocational training as less desirable than pursuing higher academic learning.

Mahdzir said Malaysia under the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) will require 2.5 times more TVET enrollment by 2025 but there is currently a shortage of such graduates.

"Currently, TVET programmes do not necessarily attract students with stronger academic qualifications. This could be due to a perception that TVET qualifications offer less attractive career and academic progression," he said.

As such, he added, the National Education Blueprint 2015-2025 aims to promote vocational and skills training as a parallel path to success along with higher education.

Among the efforts undertaken by the Education and Higher Education Ministries are letting the industry design the curriculum in vocational schools, introducing apprenticeship, hands-on training, real-life simulations, and employer training programmes.

Another is to enhance coordination across the Ministry's various TVET providers to eliminate redundant programmes, to provide greater specialisation in areas of expertise and improve cost efficiency.

Mahdzir added that TVET is one of Malaysia's success stories and the ACET provides a platform for other countries to learn from it.