

TVET vital to Brunei's social, economic development



• (Above) Director and Chief Executive Officer of the IBTE, Dr Chin Wei Keh delivering his speech during TVET International Conference 2016. (Below) Professor Dr Georg Spottl. Pictures: BT/Ridhwan Kamarulzaman



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A SENIOR Education Official underscored the importance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as it plays a key role in the economic and social development of a country.

Institute of Brunei Technical Education (IBTE) Director and Chief Executive Officer, Dr Chin Wei Keh in his welcoming remarks at the TVET International Conference 2016 yesterday said TVET is essential in producing skilled labour force, as this will allow economies to progress in terms of technology, productivity and global competitiveness. He said countries across the world are continuously reforming their TVET systems, including Brunei.

"TVET is being accorded and increasingly significant role in the development of more equitable and sustainable societies. Recognising this, Brunei through IBTE has revamped its TVET system to be relevant and responsive to both the local and global economy," said Dr Chin.

In the recent years, IBTE has transformed its system including the restructuring of courses, expanding apprenticeship options, new scheme of teaching service and recently IBTE has announced changes to all campus names.

The two-day TVET International Conference 2016 is one of the activities lined up for the celebra-

tion of the 50th anniversary of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) and the 25th anniversary of the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Vocational Education and Training (SEAMEO Voctech).

Present to officiate the conference on behalf of the Education Minister was Deputy Minister of Education, Pg Dato Paduka Hj Bahrom Pg Hj Bahar. The conference is co-organised by the SEAMEO Voctech Regional Centre here in Brunei, the Institute of Brunei Technical Education (IBTE) and Giz Recotvet from Germany.

Carrying the theme 'Ensuring Greater Impact of TVET for Sustainable Development', the conference has six sub-themes which are TVET Initiatives in Support of the ASEAN Economic Community; Strengthening Industry Collaborations; Integrating 21st Century Skills in TVET; Preparing TVET Students for "Green Jobs"; Enhancing the Quality of TVET and Innovative TVET Policies and Practices.

Also present to deliver his welcoming remarks at the conference was Director of SEAMEO VOCTECH Hj Mohammad Sharifuddin Hj Mohd Salleh. He said the conference are a means to establish links for national, regional, and international TVET initiatives, policies and practices that respond to the needs and programmes of the ASEAN Economic Community.

Yesterday's opening ceremony also saw two invited speakers from

Singapore and Germany who spoke about policies and challenges of transforming TVET.

Former Advisor to Temasek Foundation of Singapore, Dr Law Song Seng in his talk said TVET is still perceived as a system for school dropouts or low achievers, calling a need to change public opinion over vocational training, which some see as either an easy option or not being of importance.

"There is a need and urgency in changing the societal mindset and it should not be viewed for failures," he said.

Speaking to *The Brunei Times*, Professor Dr Georg Spottl who is the director of the Centre of Technology, Work and TVET at University of Bremen in Germany said cooperation between the government and industry is essential for making TVET systems sustainable.

He said with such collaboration, vocational education can meet labor market requirements on a continuous basis.

Spottl added that one of the advantages of TVET is that it ensures students to be 'job ready', noting that TVET provides an appropriate balance between general subjects, theoretical and practical aspects of the occupational field.

More than 200 participants attended the conference yesterday, including education representatives from Germany, United Kingdom, China, Korea, Pakistan among others.

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