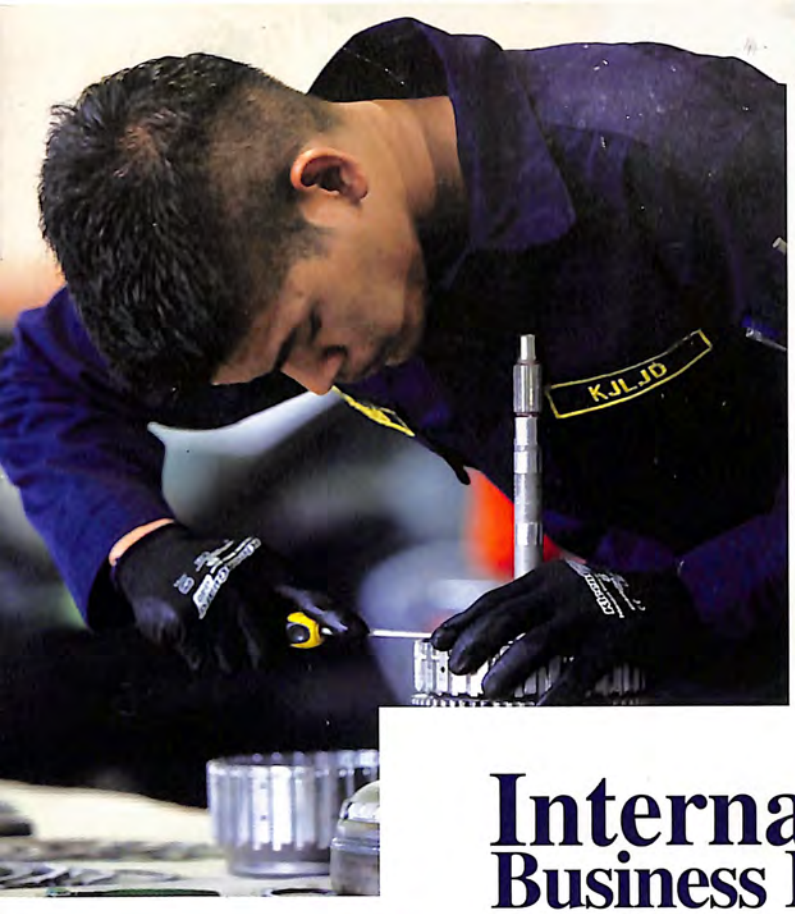

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Enhancing Innovation and Productivity with High-Value Talent

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Knowledge-Based Skilled Workforce Development

One of the most essential characteristics of a developed country is its skilled workforce. Germany and neighbouring Singapore, for instance, have 82% and 52% highly-skilled personnel in their workforce respectively. In Malaysia, the percentage of high-skilled local workers is targeted to reach more than 35% by 2020 and over 40% by 2030 from 28% currently. This translates into a continuous and significant focus on the development of human capital development and is in line with the country achieving a developed and advanced nation status by 2020.

Having a highly-skilled, efficient and effective labour market increases the attractiveness of Malaysia as a preferred destination for foreign investment. In the long run, this will lead to economic growth that would benefit every Malaysian and essentially improve their quality of life.

The most recent national roadmap, the 11th Malaysia Plan (11MP)—a guideline that marks the culmination of 30 years of Malaysia's Vision 2020—highlights the importance of the country's local workforce. The 11MP identifies the development of a skilled local workforce as one of six essential and strategic thrusts for driving and sustaining the country's economic sectors towards knowledge-based activities and enhancing national growth.

Accomplishing this will mean creating jobs that require skilled workers, while improving the productivity of the existing labour force. This will be achieved through the creation of opportunities that will allow the workforce to develop themselves. It also includes improving the quality of education to identify, manage and enhance local talent with the knowledge and skills to stay relevant in a rapidly changing and competitive global economy.

The Ministry of Human Resources already has in place 23 Industrial Training Institutes (ILPs), 8 Advanced Technology Training Centres (ADTECS) and 1 Japan-Malaysia Technical Institute (JMTI)—a collaboration between the governments of Japan and Malaysia. We have also initiated a number of training and certification programmes such as 1Malaysia Training & Skills Enhancement for the Rakyat (1MASTER), National Dual Training System and the National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS)-based training.

Furthermore, we are focusing on significantly enhancing skilled workforce development with the shifting of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) towards industry-led programmes to produce skilled talent that can meet industry needs. To this end, it is a great honour that Malaysia has been selected to host the ASEAN Skills Competition (ASC) 2016 for the third time since the biennial event was initiated in Japan in 1993.

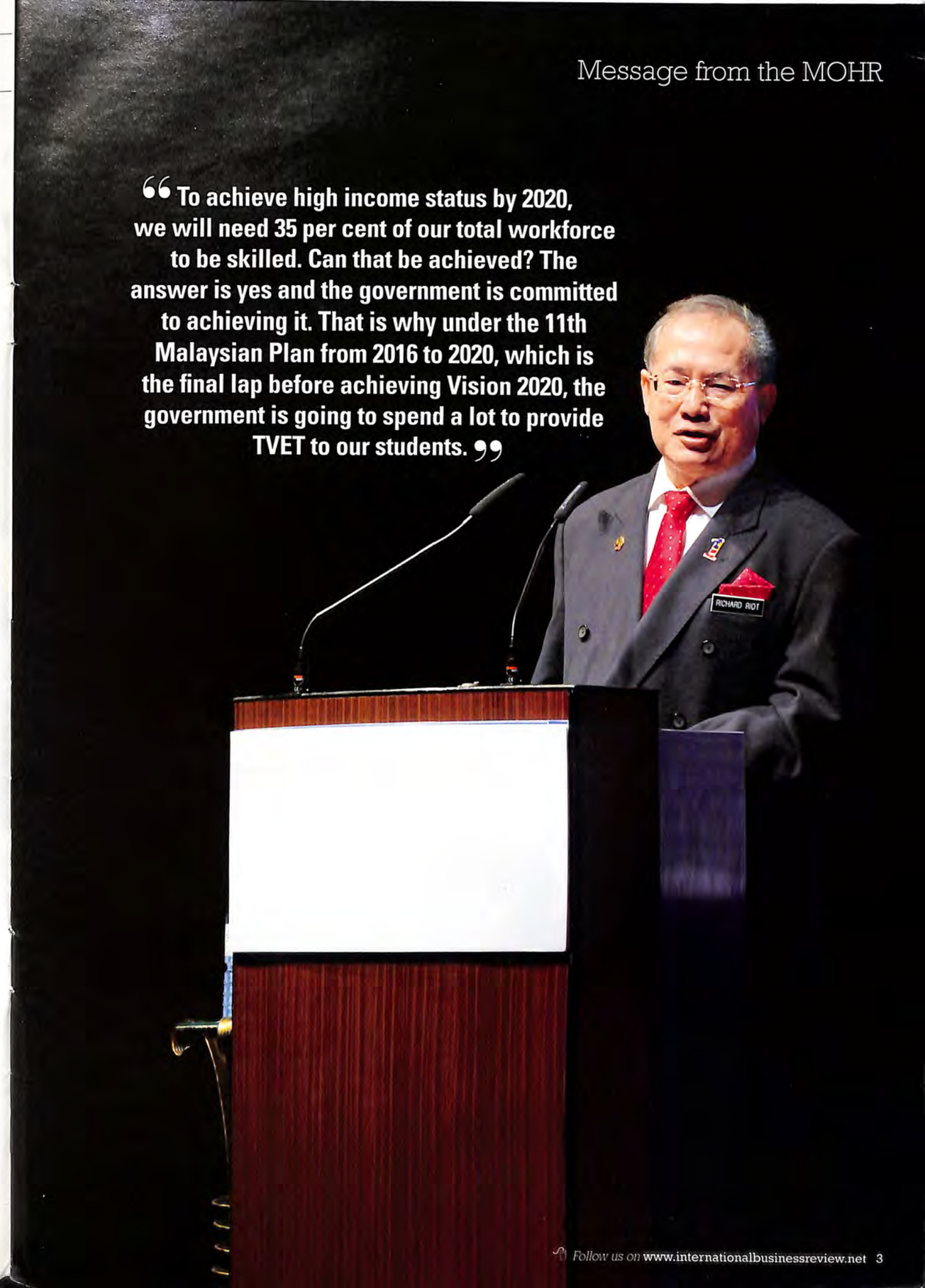
ASC focuses on, among others, promoting the development of quality vocational, technical and work values, as well as advancing work excellence and developing high-skilled workers, with 266 participants from around Southeast Asia contesting in 25 skill areas. The 50-member Malaysian delegation will participate in all the skill areas and this year, we have set a target of taking home at least 15 gold medals from the event, up from the nine that were won at the 10th ASC in Vietnam. The target skill areas include information technology, automobile technology, engineering and hairdressing.

Malaysia being selected to host the regional competition three out of the eleven times it has been held underlines the emphasis that the country places on the development of its workforce. It is also in line with Malaysia's transformation from a labour-intensive to knowledge- and innovation-based economy, with 60% of jobs that will be created by 2020 expected to require TVET-related skills.

However, whether in a TVET or academic pathway, the end goal is to foster an environment where Malaysians can take advantage of the upskilling and reskilling opportunities provided by the Ministry of Human Resources through the Department of Skills Development, Manpower Department, Human Resource Development Fund and Skills Development Fund Corporation to stay abreast of global changes and challenges. An environment in which an abundance of highly skilled Malaysians can help the nation emerge as an advanced, high-income nation by 2020 and beyond.

Datuk Seri Richard Riot Jaem
Minister, Ministry of Human Resources

"To achieve high income status by 2020, we will need 35 per cent of our total workforce to be skilled. Can that be achieved? The answer is yes and the government is committed to achieving it. That is why under the 11th Malaysian Plan from 2016 to 2020, which is the final lap before achieving Vision 2020, the government is going to spend a lot to provide TVET to our students."



Specialised Workforce

Skilled Route to a High-Income Nation

A highly-skilled labour market is one of the most important instruments for national socio-economic transformation, as they are a core component of planning, managing and delivering essential solutions. An educated population will have the knowledge and skills to support national development and participate in the benefits that result from such advancement, in the form of increased employment opportunities.

The Malaysian government has since recognised the many socio-economic advantages of a highly-skilled workforce, and has implemented and continues to execute initiatives to meet its target of a more than 35% highly-skilled labour market by 2020. The 11th Malaysia Plan (11MP)—the most recent and final stretch of the country's over three-decade journey towards realising its goal of a high-income, industrialised economy—also emphasised the importance of developing the country's human resources, by aiming to anchor national growth on its human resources.

Technical and vocational skills are expected to help develop a more skilled workforce that is better prepared and matched to industry needs, for overall national growth.

While the 35% target may not seem significant, compared with the current 28% and given that developed countries have over 50% (such as Germany at 60%), the effectiveness of the workforce is crucial and Malaysia is already ranking highly in this regard. This is evidenced by the *7th Pillar: Labour Market Efficiency* of the World Economic Forum's *Competitiveness Report 2015-2016* that places Malaysia 19th (ahead of Sweden, Japan and even Germany) from 140 countries.

Equitable Growth

One of the areas that the Malaysian government is focusing on to ensure a highly-skilled workforce is the development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes. According to UNESCO's Third International Congress on TVET in Shanghai, "TVET comprises formal, non-formal and informal learning for the world of work" and has a crucial role in the development of more equitable, sustainable and greener societies, as well as tackling global unemployment.

In Malaysia, it is particularly important as TVET skills are expected to be required for around 60% of the 1.5 million jobs that will be created in 2020 as part of the 11MP. One of the six strategic thrusts identified by the government in the 11MP is "accelerating human capital development for an advanced nation" which focuses on harnessing TVET to transition to a higher-skilled workforce, as well as to create a more inclusive economy by raising the income and wellbeing of the 2.7 million bottom 40% household group (B40 households) in the country.

"The government will continue to provide facilities to workers through upskilling, reskilling and multiskilling programmes. As a country aiming to be a high income nation, the development of skilled workers is as vital as economic growth."

– Datuk Seri Najib Razak, Malaysian Prime Minister

BETTERING THE B40 HOUSEHOLDS

	FROM	TO
Approach	Lifting B40 households above the poverty line through improved income levels and assistance with living costs	Uplifting B40 households to middle-class society by further improving income levels and wealth creation, as well as increasing education and skill levels
Scope	Assisting B40 households with individual micro-enterprises	Fostering community and social-based enterprises in the B40 community, in addition to individual enterprises
	Focus on developing micro-entrepreneurship and economic activities in low-value, traditional industries	Building capacity to participate in high-productivity, innovative, and creative economic activities
Characteristics	B40 households have low wealth and non-financial asset ownership, and are easily affected by economic shocks	B40 households are able to save and build wealth including through non-financial asset ownership, making them more resilient to economic shocks
	B40 households are highly reliant on government assistance	B40 households are independent and rely less on government assistance programmes

Source: 11th Malaysia Plan

Successfully achieving the goal will double the household income of the B40 group from RM2,537 in 2014 to RM5,270 in 2020, which will help increase the country's middle-class society to 45% of the total population. In addition, more B40 households will have family members with tertiary education, from 9% in 2014 to 20% in 2020, who will be contributing to the overall development of the country. More than just increasing income, the government will introduce the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to ensure high quality of life commensurate with income.

The availability of effective and efficient human resources significantly increases the attractiveness of the country to international investors and global organisations. The development of a highly-skilled workforce ensures that Malaysia is positioned to grow with and meet the demands of a rapidly changing global economic environment through innovative products and services created by a knowledgeable labour market. IBR

Built for the Skill

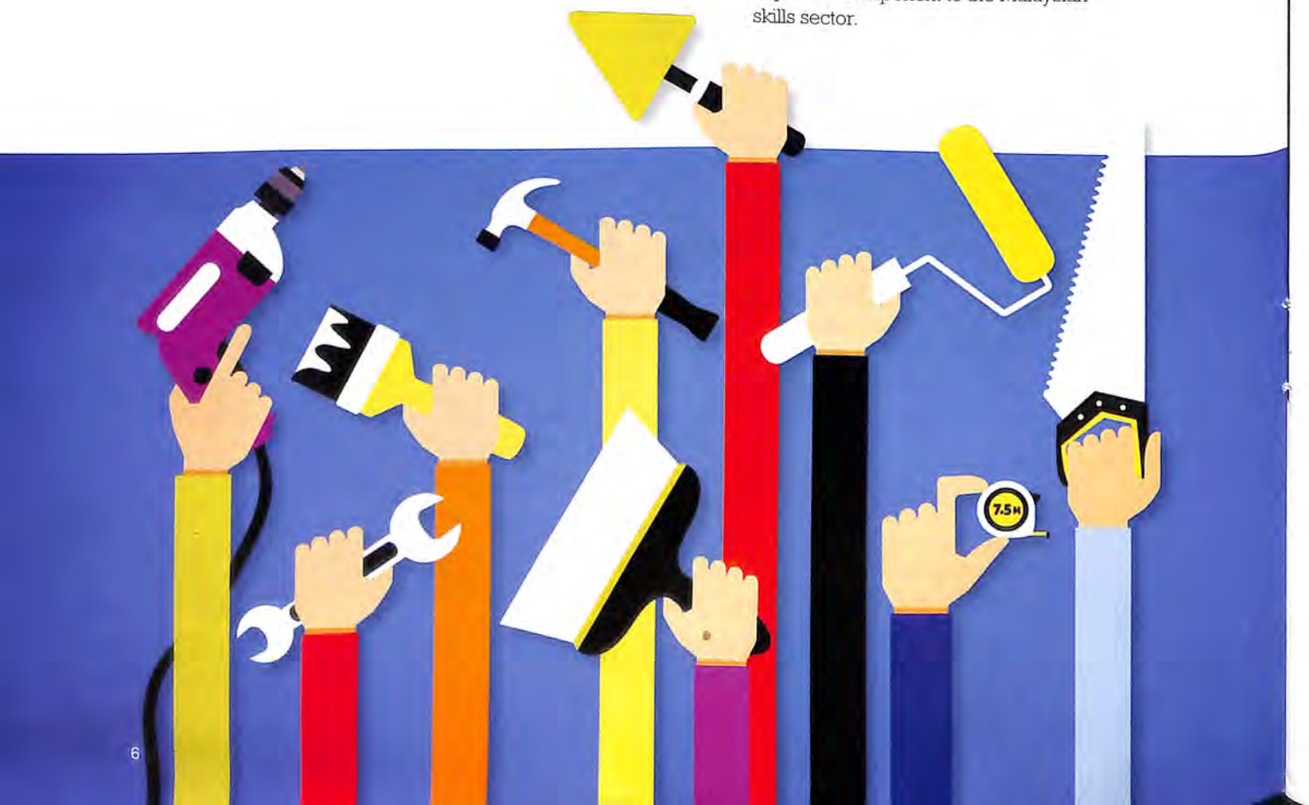
Department of Skills Development

With the nation gearing up to achieve developed nation status by 2020, the goal of having a skilled workforce is a key factor in the agenda, especially so since a skilled workforce is crucial to achieving national development as outlined in the Eleventh Malaysia Plan. Integral to making this a reality is the Department of Skills Development (DSD), a body tasked with coordinating and regulating the implementation of skills training, as well as to research and develop job competency standards and expertise to improve the quality of skilled human resource in the country.

A Skilled Malaysian Workforce

Under the Ministry of Human Resources, the Department of Skills Development (DSD) is the body entrusted to develop and establish national occupational skills standards, thus ensuring that Malaysian industries are properly equipped and readied with a competent skilled workforce.

The tool by which to achieve this is the National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS), a national competency standard jointly developed by the DSD and relevant industries, created with the purpose of ensuring that suppliers or training institutions and colleges train students according to industry requirements, an important component to the Malaysian skills sector.



Since its revamp in 2011, NOSS has been updated to make it more dynamic, with additional competency standards being incorporated as well as the addition of new standards for different industry sectors. "With NOSS we can speak on the same wavelength and identify the kind of competency gaps between job demand as well as the provisioning of training and supply of skills workforce," reveals DSD director-general Datuk Dr Pang Chau Leong when met at his office in Putrajaya recently.

National competency standards are now in place for most jobs in the Malaysian economy. In addition, over the last five years the DSD has awarded more than 510,000 national skills certifications (Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia), proof that the number of skilled workforce in the country is on the rise.

"Our training centres have very high employability rates. You hear a lot of unemployed graduates but you don't hear about unemployed skilled workers trained throughout our colleges. Many of our approved training centers have reported more than a 90 percent employability rate, meaning they get jobs upon graduation," adds Datuk Dr Pang.

Bright Future

Certainly, the efforts undertaken by the DSD are comparable to those found around the world. The training in Malaysia match international qualifications and requirements, asserts Datuk Dr Pang, who cites formal arrangements with awarding bodies like City & Guilds of London, Pearson UK, CompTIA US (industry competency standards in the information and communication field) as well as an arrangement with a Scottish qualification agency and The Welding Institute of UK.

"We have formal arrangements with many of the internationally known industry awarding bodies whereby we work towards a Dual Qualification, which means that while the Malaysian students work towards meeting the Malaysian standards, they also work towards getting foreign qualification that's recognised internationally," says Datuk Dr Pang.

It's also part of efforts the DSD has undertaken to correct misconceptions among Malaysians about the skills or vocational field.

"The Malaysian society's mindset has to change. We can no longer look down and have a negative perception of the vocational field. It is fast becoming another career of choice. The world over, the vocational field is regarded as an equal option, sometimes a more attractive option than the academic field," asserts Datuk Dr Pang, adding that under the 11th Malaysia Plan, 1.5 million new jobs will be created in the next five years and that at least 60 percent of the new jobs will require technical and vocational qualifications.

And it isn't just for the locals. Foreign students are heading to Malaysia to gain valuable training under a programme called "SkillsMalaysia INVITE". Last year, over 1,000 students from the Middle East, Sri Lanka, the Indian subcontinent, China and Indonesia converged in Malaysia to undergo skills training, a clear indication that the training provided in the country is of high quality.

Enhancing Skills The DSD Way

Opportunities abound for Malaysian youth to get training, thanks to the DSD for its ongoing effort in accrediting more training centres around the country. Up to May of this year, 1,197 training centres have been accredited by the DSD, offering up to 5,900 different programmes in various skills and fields throughout the country. This means there are between 40 and 50 of such centres found in each state, offering training in areas ranging from Medical & Pharmaceuticals to Chemical to Mechanical & Electrical Service Maintenance and Biotechnology among others.

At the school level, teachers are able to provide counselling with regards to the skills/vocational field to Form 4 and 5 students who don't know what to do once school ends. Parents and youth are also

Datuk Dr Pang Chau Leong

Director-General, Department of Skills Development, Ministry of Human Resources

Datuk Dr Pang Chau Leong was first appointed as the D-G of the DSD in 2009. An engineer by training, Datuk Dr Pang obtained a Bachelor of Engineering from the University of Malaya, a Masters of Science (Human Resource Development) from the University of Manchester UK, and PhD (Technical and Vocational Education) awarded jointly by Universiti Tun Hussein Onn and University of Bremen in Germany.

Since 1986, he has been an active contributor both at national and international levels in the fields of skills testing and certification, curriculum and occupational standards development, competency-based training, human resource planning and national skilled workforce development. In addition, Datuk Dr Pang has presented papers and represented the country in Indonesia, Brunei, Thailand, Singapore, Australia, Japan, Korea, Australia, South Africa, United Kingdom, Canada and Germany.

He currently sits on the board of the Skills Development Fund Corp, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, German-Malaysian Institute, Educational Malaysia Global Services and Malaysian Board of Technologists.

not left out. To create awareness and narrow the knowledge gap that exists in parents and youth, roadshows and skills carnivals have been held by the DSD with the single aim of educating them about opportunities available in the field.

The DSD is also actively working on ramping up training of vocational trainers and teachers so that high quality training can be provided. To build up a pool of qualified and competent vocational instructors who will ultimately support the expansion of training colleges around the country, the Centre for Instructor and Advanced Skills Training (CIAST) in Shah Alam has been expanded to include 13 satellite campuses in almost every state.

Raising The Bar

The skills training bar has been raised, all thanks to the DSD. Among them include the rise in the number of training centres across the nation. Five years ago there were between 700 and 800 centres. This number has since risen to 1,000. The number of programmes have also increased, from 4,000 previously to 6,000 now. And it continues to expand.

There are also other ways that youth can obtain training. The National Dual Training System, based on a very successful model in Germany, incorporates on-the-job training (about 70 percent) alongside training taught in colleges or institutes, expanding the availability of training.

Much can also be said about the quality of training in producing skilled workers. "Over the last five years, we have awarded more than 500,000 national skills certificates, meaning there are a lot more qualified skilled workers in the market now," says Datuk Dr Pang. The National Skills Development Act also helps to ensure that training providers adhere to high standards of delivery.

The number of centres with a 3-star rating has also gone up (a 3-star rating ensures good value-for-money training, and is the minimum rating training centres/institutes have to get) In 2011, the proportion of 3-star training centres was at 76 percent compared to 94 percent in 2015. Centres that fail to meet the minimum rating will have their accreditations revoked and government funding stopped.

Perhaps the biggest test is employability, a sure indicator of supply meeting demand. "Across the board most of the training providers talk about 85 to 90 percent employability upon graduation," says Datuk Dr Pang.

Over the last five years, the DSD has successfully mainstreamed the skills sector in the national education and training system, making it a good choice for those who want an alternative to academic education. Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) which includes skills training is also considered to be a game-changer in the country's effort to bring Malaysia to developed nation status, adds Datuk Dr Pang.

"The Malaysian society's mindset has to change. We can no longer look down and have a negative perception of the vocational field. It is fast becoming another career of choice. Around the world, the vocational field is regarded as an equal option, and sometimes a more attractive option than the academic field."

– Datuk Dr Pang Chau Leong, DSD director-general

Bearing Fruit

It is clear that the DSD's efforts are bearing fruit. Through the DSD, the skills sector is now a major component of the country's human capital development system. Having a Malaysian skills certificate can now ensure entry into the public service, a big recognition by the government, and something the DSD has been fighting long and hard for.

The DSD has also set its sights on winning in other ways, specifically winning gold medals in the 11th ASEAN Skills Competition (ASC 2016), to be held in Kuala Lumpur from Sept 23 to 28 at the Malaysian Agro Exposition Park in Serdang, with Malaysia as host. An ASEAN-level skills competition held once every two years, ASC promotes skills training and hopes to raise skills standards in the region. The competition will see 50 national champions of ASEAN countries compete with one another to be the best in ASEAN in 25 skills fields. But ASEAN is also a stepping stone for the country to become a world champion, says Datuk Dr Pang. The DSD is setting its sights on a much bigger target: Achieving gold in the 44th World Skills Competition in Abu Dhabi next year.

With all of this taking place, Malaysia is poised to achieve greater recognition the world over in the field of skills. Certainly, with the country gearing up to achieve developed nation status in 2020 and the skills sector predicted to become a major contributor, the future of skills development in Malaysia looks very bright indeed. IBR

Countries around the world have since realised the importance of technical and vocational training to match human workforce skills to industry needs and advance economic growth.

ASEAN Skills Competition 2016

Enhancing Innovation and Productivity with High-Value Talent

There is a disparity between supply and demand for skilled human capital in a number of economic sectors in Malaysia. To effectively bridge this gap, the Malaysian government has identified Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as one of the most important vehicles to strengthen the country's human capital, as well as a crucial driver of economic transformation to achieve high-income, industrialised nation status by 2020. The ASEAN Skills Competition (ASC) is a regional proponent of this goal, providing a platform for youths to showcase their knowledge, skills and talents while promoting further development.

TVET has, for a long time, been regarded as a last option in education and career selection owing to the public perception that the courses are for those who do not perform well in other academic endeavours. However, this impression is changing as governments around the world increasingly recognise the innovative significance of technical courses to the national economy, with developed and industrialised countries having a higher number of students in the vocational and technical stream (such as Germany, with around 60%). The result? Technological advances in machines and automotive.

"The awareness of the benefits of skill training among students, parents and teachers is rising in line with the vision of the Department of Skills Development (DSD) to make technical and vocational training in the country mainstream," explained Dr Ghalip Spahat, Department of Skills Development (DSD) Deputy Director and Malaysia's Technical Delegate and Secretariat for ASC 2016, pointing out that public interest in skill training is increasing in Malaysia.

DSD was established in 1971. Initially called the National Industrial Training and Trade Certification Board, it was restructured in 2006, with the enactment of National Skills Development Act (NASDA) 652 to, among others, coordinate strategies and skills training programmes, and develop and continuously revise training standards and the certification system. Strengthening the quality of vocational and technical education, as well as creating more skilled workers, are also some of the goals of ASC.

Dr Ghalip noted that Malaysia's participation in ASC is in agreement with the country's goal to achieve high-income status. "To overcome the challenges of the skills championship, participants must possess a competitive edge that allows them to quickly identify problems and take fitting actions to solve them. This can only be achieved through training and practice and will result in individuals who are dynamic and responsive to real-world challenges."

Industry Relevant

ASC 2016 participants will be tested in 25 technical and vocational skill areas including IT, automobile and aircraft maintenance, welding, cooking, cabinet making, electronics, hairstyling and fashion technology. To ensure that the competitions are effective and attuned to real-world industry environments, the skill sets and competition have to be updated regularly. To do this, ASC taps into WorldSkills International, the global umbrella organisation for the technical and vocational competitions.

Successful TVET Implementation

	From	To
Governance	2 Accreditation Agencies (MQA and DSD) with different sets of qualifications	Single qualification system adopted by both MQA and DSD
	Different quality rating systems for public and private TVET institutions, depending on which Ministry the institution is registered with	Single rating system for both public and private TVET institutions
Programme delivery	Design and delivery of curriculum led by individual TVET institutions or Government	Design and delivery of curriculum led by industry, in partnership with TVET institutions and Government
	No specialisation among TVET institutions	Institutions to specialise in and create Centre of Excellence in niche areas of expertise
Capacity	164,000 intake in 2013	225,000 intake in 2020, by maximising use of existing institutions
Profile	Limited recognition and low premium	Career of choice for students

Source: 11th Malaysia Plan

Malaysia's TVET initiative aims to successfully match demand to supply of a highly skilled workforce with programmes that are designed in collaboration with the industry to ensure that the skills of the labour market are tuned to industry needs.

"ASC is benchmarked with the WorldSkills Competitions, which fields more than 45 skill areas that are created and continuously verified through cooperation and development with international organisations, NGOs, educators, governments and industries based on current trends and technology," Dr Ghalip explained. WorldSkill Competitions are also biennial, with the next one happening in Abu Dhabi, UAE in 2017. As the regional subset of the WorldSkills Competitions, the selection of skill areas is passed on from the global organisation. "This happens with all the regional competitions: the Americas, Europe, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), ASEAN and Oceania."

Competitors at ASC must not be over 22 years old (25 for the WorldSkills Competitions) with each participating country allowed to send 2 competitors for each skill area for 3 days of the competition, which are predominantly hands-on exercises. Participants can only compete in the activities once in their lifetime. Dr Ghalip noted that "Various efforts have been and are being implemented to ensure Malaysian participants are more capable and have the opportunity to perform highly at the competitions."

These include establishing technical and coordinating committees, motivation and financial incentives, motivational programmes and communication courses and agencies to support participants with training sessions. To this end, the country is targeting at least 15 gold medals in a number of skill areas including IT Network Administration, Software and Web Design at the competition this year, up from nine at the last event.

The target skill areas are selected based on a number of factors such as the areas that the participants were more adept at during training and practice, past experience in skill competitions, competencies and motivation. Trainers present monthly reports of the performance of the participants, enabling DSD to know the skill areas that the country has a competitive edge in and those that it needs to improve.

Education Benchmark

This year, the 11th iteration of ASC will be hosted by Malaysia—its third time since the competitions were created in 1993—from 19th to 29th September 2016 at the 130-hectare Malaysia Agro Exposition Park Serdang (MAEPS), Selangor. The host of the biennial event is selected from the ten ASEAN nations and decided during the competition's organising committee meeting two years before the event.

"Malaysia proposed hosting ASC this year at the ASC 2014 in Hanoi, Vietnam," Dr Ghalip explained. During the Technical Committee Meeting in April this year, Thailand confirmed its intentions to host the competitions in 2018. "The two years gives the host countries time to plan because of the scale and magnitude of the event."

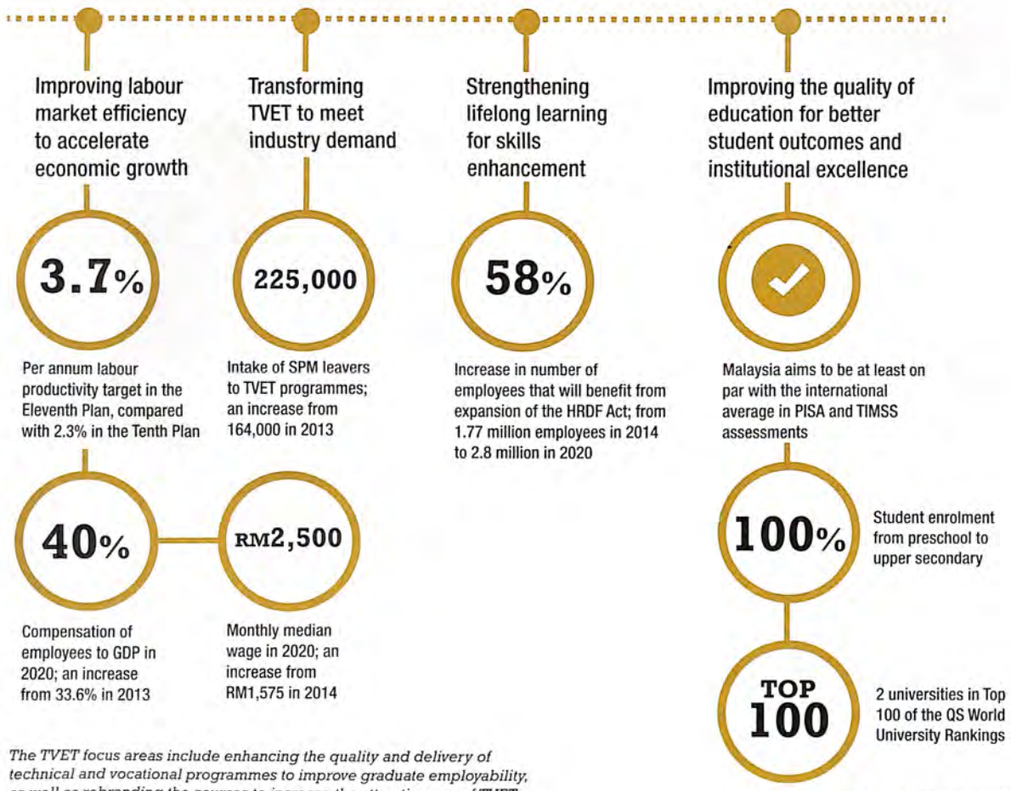
Planning for an event of this significance to the technical and vocational development of the nation requires effective collaborations with the necessary industries, acquisition of essential equipment and tools, and coordination with the concerned national agencies. According to Dr Ghalip, partnering with industries is particularly crucial in procuring expensive equipment and automobiles for some skill areas, which the government would be unable to afford on its own.

The collaboration between the government and industries is also important because the human resource created will be required for the advancement of industries and national growth. "Malaysia needs to close the gap between demand and supply of human capital. This is in line with the 11th Malaysia Plan that emphasises TVET, enables industry leaders and requires more highly skilled workers," said Dr Ghalip.

"The expectation of human resource development is to transform Malaysia from a middle- to a high-income, industrialised economy. To achieve innovative competitiveness in the regional and global market, companies and industries need a comprehensive and systematic approach to develop, attract and retain the highly skilled human capital needed in the country."

– Dr Ghalip Spahat, Department of Skills Development (DSD)
Deputy Director and Malaysia's Technical Delegate and Secretariat for ASC 2016

Selected Outcomes for TVET in the 11th Malaysia Plan



The TVET focus areas include enhancing the quality and delivery of technical and vocational programmes to improve graduate employability, as well as rebranding the courses to increase the attractiveness of TVET.

Source: 11th Malaysia Plan

Developing more highly skilled workers is also necessary to benchmark the level of education in the country against international standards. Dr Ghalip cites South Korea, which won about 13 Gold Medals in the WorldSkills Competitions in São Paulo, Brazil in 2015, as an example. South Korea is also home to a number of globally recognised giants such as Samsung and Daewoo, which can be said to be a testament to the country's technical education standards and the availability of highly skilled workers. "If we can create a capable workforce, then we would be able to develop more marketable products that we can sell to the world."

According to the Malaysian Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) Annual Report, TVET under the Education National Key Resource Area (NKEA) has significant potential to generate massive revenue for the country's economy. The report estimates that returns generated from Private TVET Skills Training Institutions are projected to reach RM100,000 per student, with more than 2,700 international students enrolled.

For Dr Ghalip, changing the public perception of TVET is crucial as he calls on Malaysians to take part and attend the ASC 2016 where more than 100,000 visitors from the region and around the world (including ASEAN countries, China, Ecuador and Timor Leste) are expected to attend. He pointed out that, "To the world, TVET is not a number two or three choice, it is the first step in the move to developing a highly skilled human capital." IBR

Malaysia Boleh!

Following Up on the Success at ASC 2014

As Malaysia gets ready for the ASEAN Skills Competition (ASC) 2016 – not just by ensuring everything in order as the host, but also by fielding a team of capable individuals to represent the country – we look back at the previous ASC which took place in Hanoi, Vietnam in 2014. After 10 days' worth of vocational skill demonstrations, the competition was wrapped up and the medals were tallied. Malaysia emerged second behind the host nation. It was an astounding result, setting the bar high for the Malaysian competitors set to represent the country this year.

The 10th ASEAN Skills Competition took place at the Hanoi National Convention Center in My Dinh, Hanoi, from the 19th to the 29th of October 2014, with the theme *Skills - our intrinsic value*.

In her welcome speech on the opening day, Deputy Chairman of the National Assembly Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan said, "In the spirit of the theme, each competitor should endeavour, trying their best to express their own values, creativity, and passion for the field of professional expertise that you

Held in Hanoi, Vietnam, the 2014 ASC saw a Malaysian team that performed admirably, placing second in a group of ten countries.

The Results

The preparations for ASC 2014 paid off in spectacular fashion when the Malaysian team netted nine gold medals, four silver medals and four bronze ones. 17 other Malaysian competitors brought home Medals of Excellence.

A Malaysian participant in the automobile field works on a project in preparation for the Asean Skills Competition.

have chosen, thereby proving the mission of this year's Competition of *honesty - integrity - fairness - collaboration – creation*."

It drew participation from 10 ASEAN member states, which sent 283 of their best to compete. Some 700 international guests, and an even larger number of students also made their way to the venue.

Malaysia, which has been a part of the biennial ASC since it hosted the first one in 1995, deployed 51 youths to the competition to exhibit their skills in the various skill fields, which included cooking, hairdressing, beauty therapy, plumbing and automotive technology.

A Powerful Platform

According to Malaysian ASC Contingent Manager Abdul Halim Jahaya, the ASC presented a platform to recognition for skills talent at international level. "The competition is also a an benchmark of the technical and vocational training conducted among youth institutes in ASEAN countries, while also promoting the skills of the Malaysian workforce as an added attraction to foreign investors.".

"Malaysia's participation in the ASC is in line with the objectives of the 11th Malaysia Plan (RMK11) to have 35 per cent skilled workers by 2020, on par with countries such as Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea. ASC is held biennially and is hosted in rotation among ASEAN countries," he added.

Preparing a Quality Team

With stiff competition from the region, Malaysia had to strive to ensure that its selection of participants were up to the mark. The man in charge of this mandate was Abdul Halim. "The national contingent had been prepared in 25 fields of skills for ASC 2014, where 17 areas were coordinated by the human resources ministry through the skills development department (JPK)," he revealed.

"The ASC provides an opportunity to exchange information and best practices regarding industry and professional education."

– Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi,
Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister

These 17 areas spanned a wide swathe of fields and demanded specialised skill sets. They were IT software solution for business, electronics, web design, fashion technology, automobile technology, restaurant service, cooking, mechatronics, graphic design technology, IT network system administration, beauty therapy, hairdressing, industrial automation, cabinet making, information network cabling, CNC maintenance and mobile robotics.

The Works Ministry helmed the training for the subsequent eight sectors – welding, wall and floor tiling, plumbing and heating, electrical installation, bricklaying, joinery, CAD mechanical engineering design and refrigeration and air-conditioning.

"In progressing towards an advanced nation, we will need more high-skilled workers. Therefore, the government would like more students to pursue an education in technical and vocational training and be trained and qualified."

– Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak,
Malaysian Prime Minister

Encompassing up to 27 skill areas, including bricklaying, the biennial Asean Skills Competition provides hands-on vocational training for Malaysians equipping them with industry-relevant skills.

It is hoped that Malaysia would not only match the stellar performance achieved by the Malaysian contingent in 2014, but better those results. With the experience gained from the participation at ASC 2014, and the nine ASCs preceding it, combined with the capable mentors and training afforded by the Department of Skills Development, chances are high that Malaysia will finish on top in the ASC 2016. IBR

worldskills ASEAN Kuala Lumpur 2016

SKILLS FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

ASEAN SKILLS COMPETITION KUALA LUMPUR 2016

24 - 26 September 2016
MAEPS, Serdang, Selangor

Organizers:

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