

Tianjin plays host to global technical education conference

Agenda includes streamlining integration of vocational training

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Around 1,000 delegates at the 2024 World Vocational and Technical Education Development Conference are focusing on topics ranging from the integration of industry and education to sustainable development, teacher training and lifelong learning.

Taking place on Wednesday to Friday in Tianjin of North China, the event aims to establish six key elements in the field of vocational education on an international scale: a conference, an alliance, an award, a competition, an exhibition and a journal.

This year's conference is co-hosted by the Ministry of Education, the National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO, and the Tianjin municipal government. Participants are from important international organizations such as UNESCO, government departments, industry heavyweights, research institutions and vocational schools.

The "conference" will feature an opening ceremony, keynote speeches, bilateral talks, parallel sessions, a roundtable meeting of education ministers from participating countries, and a closing ceremony. The "alliance" is for global vocational and technical education development and is composed of vocational education-related schools, research institutions, industry companies and educational organizations around the world.

The "award" refers to the world vocational education award, which will be bestowed at the closing ceremony. The "competition" refers to an international vocational school skills competition with 42 tracks and a three-tier structure (school-level preliminary rounds, provincial-level intermediary heats and the final competition). The final round consists of three stages, with the championship to be held concurrently with the conference.

The "exhibition" refers to the



The 2024 World Vocational and Technical Education Development Conference is taking place in Tianjin. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

world vocational and technical education exhibition, covering 12,500 square meters and featuring areas devoted to things such as vocational education achievements, intangible cultural heritage preservation, industry-education integration and international cooperation. The "journal" refers to the establishment of *World Vocational and Technical Education*, presented by Tianjin University of Technology and Education, with the inaugural issue to be released during the conference.

The conference debuted in Tianjin in August 2022, and last year, the city and the Ministry of Education signed a strategic cooperation agreement to stage it every two years.

High-ranking officials from 20 countries are expected to be present at this year's ministerial-level roundtable to discuss and share their experiences in vocational education development



A student from Tianjin Medical College does an examination for a foreign guest at the 2022 conference. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

and how it can better serve economic and social development. As well, leaders from Tianjin and the Ministry of Education have been

invited to engage in face-to-face discussions with ministerial-level guests, aiming to further promote cooperation in vocational educa-

tion between China and foreign countries and regions.

The conference will release the Tianjin consensus on world vocational education development, outlining a shared vision, initiatives and actions for such development. It will emphasize strengthening cooperation and working together to build a fair and inclusive vocational education system.

Tianjin has actively developed the "Tianjin Model" for vocational education development and is recognized by the Ministry of Education as the "national vocational education reform experimental zone", "national vocational education reform and innovation demonstration zone" and the "national modern vocational education reform and innovation demonstration zone".

The city has deepened integration of industry and education to serve high-quality development. It has established two large indus-

12,500
square meters

area that the world vocational and technical education exhibition at the 2024 World Vocational and Technical Education Development Conference covers

try-education alliances focused on biomedicine and information technology application innovation and chiefly develops eight city industry-education alliances in fields such as integrated circuits, automotive equipment and the digital economy. Tianjin also set up three industry-education integration communities in new energy, intelligent supply chains and high-end equipment with leading companies.

Measures have been introduced to improve the arrangement of higher vocational education majors, and a mechanism for adjusting majors in response to industry dynamics has been optimized, with new majors like artificial intelligence, energy storage materials and intelligent connected vehicles closely aligned with leading industries.

Tianjin has vigorously promoted the integration of vocational and general education. Pilot projects in five secondary vocational schools have implemented comprehensive reforms to meet diverse development needs of students, and the city has also improved mechanisms that offer moral and technical education and combine study and work while making efforts to nurture high-quality technical professionals, skilled artisans and master craftsmen.

The vocational education curriculum development system has been established in Tianjin, integrating resources from industries, enterprises, research institutions and academia. In 2023, Tianjin won 10 first prizes at the National Vocational College Skills Competition and 16 golden medals at the Vocational Skills Competition of the People's Republic of China. Sixty percent of higher vocational graduates in the city are employed there, creating a reservoir of high-quality skilled talents for local economic and social development.

Cooperative project Luban Workshop sets standard for instructional excellence

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Luban Workshop has become a landmark cooperative project in cultivating local talents in partner countries with qualifications and technical training on Chinese technologies, craftsmanship, and products.

Led by Tianjin University of Technology and Education, or TUTE, and established in collaboration with other local vocational schools and research institutions, 33 Luban Workshops have been set up in 29 countries across Asia, Africa, and Europe, providing systematic solutions for the internationalization of China's vocational education while bolstering the Belt and Road Initiative.

To date, the workshop has provided educational qualifications to 20,000 individuals and skills training to 35,000, nurturing more than 2,200 local teaching staff members. As a result, Chinese and foreign institutions have established more than 60 global teaching standards and 133 sets of three-dimensional education resources.

Lyu Jingquan, one of the initiators and builders of Luban Workshop and former vice-president of TUTE, said establishing a new platform and brand for international cooperation "is an inevitable choice for the reform and development of vocational education in China, and Tianjin plays a crucial role in this endeavor."

Lyu emphasized the significance of vocational teachers utilizing Chinese standards and products to enhance the adaptability of local vocational education, and highlighted the importance of young students spending time during their voca-



From left: A teacher and a student from China demonstrate quality evaluation for Portuguese students at the Luban Workshop in Portugal. Students are trained at the Luban Workshop in Thailand. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

tional preparation period to learn Chinese technologies, craftsmanship and products. "This effort is meaningful for China, partner countries, and the world," he noted.

Lyu also believes Luban Workshop is not just about one-way output, but the "Chinese model" going global, adapting teaching methods suitable for partner countries and truly sharing with the world.

In July 2015, China's Ministry of Education and the Tianjin municipal government jointly launched the National Modern Vocational Education Reform and Innovation Demonstration Zone, making internationalization of vocational education a key task. In December that year, significant progress was made in Luban Workshop in terms of objectives, implementation paths, construction models, core content and guarantee measures.

In March 2016, the first Luban

Workshop outside China was established through cooperation between vocational schools in China and Thailand. Subsequently, Tianjin's vocational schools collaborated with institutions in the United Kingdom, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Cambodia, Portugal, Djibouti, Kenya, South Africa, Mali, Nigeria, Egypt and Tajikistan to establish more local workshops.

Luban Workshop's Engineering Practice Innovation Project (EPIP), led by TUTE in collaboration with 15 Tianjin schools and research institutions, won China's highest award for national-level teaching achievements in 2022. EPIP is a teaching model rooted in vocational education practices and scientific research, aiming to localize Chinese education while maintaining an international perspective.

At the first World Vocational and Technical Education Development

Conference in 2022, scholars from more than 10 countries delivered keynote speeches on the application and promotion of EPIP, advancing research on Chinese vocational education overseas and enhancing its global influence.

Lyu, as a pioneer of EPIP teaching, facilitated establishment of EPIP teaching research centers in Ethiopia and collaborated with similar centers in Thailand and Portugal. These efforts were recognized in the Report on the Development of Vocational Education in China (2012-22). In March 2023, with the approval of the municipal education commission, Lyu led his team in establishing the Tianjin EPIP Research and Promotion Center.

Lyu emphasized that with the practical experiences in Thailand, the UK, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Cambodia, Portugal, and Djibouti, Luban Workshop is set to become a

global brand for Chinese vocational education. He noted that Luban Workshop has conducted more than 60 educational activities in fields such as railway transportation, mechanical and electrical engineering, smart manufacturing, and new energy vehicles in countries across Asia, Europe, and Africa, and that its partner institutions include Ayutthaya Technical College in Thailand, University of Chichester in the UK, Polytechnic Institute of Setubal in Portugal, Ain Shams University in Egypt, and Ethiopian Technical University.

The local workshops have collaborated with multiple Chinese enterprises, including Huawei, Haier, China National Building Material Group, Zhejiang Tianhuang Science and Technology Industrial and Zoomlion. They have engaged in major international cooperation projects such as the China-Thailand

high-speed rail, the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation mechanism, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, BRICS investment and the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway.

In Africa, the programs offered by Luban Workshop align with the economic and social development of partner countries, particularly focusing on local industrial growth. It has introduced more than 30 programs in areas such as additive manufacturing, new energy, mechatronics, railway operations and traditional Chinese medicine.

In Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia and site of the African Union headquarters, Luban Workshop focuses on artificial intelligence. It supports Ethiopian Technical University's undergraduate programs in manufacturing technology, electronics and communication technology, and electrical and control technology, and serves a graduate program in electrical and control technology. In Egypt, one of the most proactive countries in North Africa in developing renewable energy, Luban Workshop has responded to the country's industrial development needs by offering a program in the application of new energy technologies.

Established in 1979, TUTE is one of the earliest ordinary undergraduate teacher training institutions in China dedicated to cultivating teachers for vocational education. The university has produced over 80,000 high-quality teachers and specialized talents and trained over 4,000 talents for more than 70 countries.

Over 40,000 TUTE graduates have served as teachers in more than 6,000 vocational schools nationwide, and over 8,000 have become model teachers, skill masters and leaders.