

MINISTER ARMANDO MONTEIRO NETO'S SPEECH *OPENING CEREMONY – 11.08.15*

The WorldSkills Competition highlights the importance of the vocational education agenda.

Vocational education prepares youth for the labour market. Additionally, it also reflects a social development perspective and creates opportunities for youth.

Workers who have received vocational education and training have greater chances of getting their first jobs. They usually have more stable careers. Companies tend to retain workers who are highly qualified, even in times of crisis.

Not to mention higher income [Brazil: when we compare two people with the same educational background (e.g. High School Education), the person with at least one year of vocational education and training will have a 15% higher income. There is a 24% difference when this training is provided by SENAI].

Brazil is hosting the WorldSkills Competition, the greatest vocational education and skills excellence Competition in the world. Competitors and Team Leaders from other countries attending the Ceremony, please excuse me as I make an observation about what this represents for Brazil.

In Brazil, only 8.8% of our students attend High School and vocational education courses. In developed countries, this percentage is much higher: 76.8% in Austria; 69.7% in Finland; 51.5% in Germany; and 49.9% in the European Union.

Although access to education is still very limited, Brazil has performed well in the WorldSkills Competition throughout the years. This is mainly due to SENAI's remarkable efforts, and I had the honour to run this institution for eight years when I led the National Confederation of Industry - CNI.

SENAI supports education and meets specific business qualification needs. SENAI's efforts and history walk hand in hand with the history and efforts of Brazilian industry. SENAI represents an important heritage for Brazil and our society.

Industry is the engine that helps countries develop, creating job opportunities, as well as income generation and benefits for workers.

Vocational education programmes need to consider the modern industry scenario, and should be designed to meet international market requirements.

Arising needs, new contents, emerging technologies; these are all part of the daily industrial routine. This is why worker qualifications should be closely related to an entrepreneurial vision and awareness. Vocational education and training policies walk hand in hand with the production sector.

In this sense, we should mention an initiative undertaken by the Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade, which is mapping out vocational education needs with different enterprises in order to provide education and training solutions according to the actual market reality.

Pronatec was launched in September 2013 and became fully operational in 2014, when more than 300,000 students had vocational training opportunities in different enterprises.

Along with this work, this initiative intends to adjust curriculums and create new courses within the programme.

This approach also supports new investments in Brazil, including new industrial parks or R&D centres, as well as streamlining or expanding existing industrial facilities. This will be the primary focus of the Ministry in 2016, and today, we can also mention Fiat, where employees in the entire supply chain in their new industrial park will be trained.

In some instances, after training, students are able to get a job in 90% of the cases, which makes training a great opportunity for those who wish to enter the labour market. Training courses are quite diversified in order to cover a wide range of production sectors that are supported by Pronatec.

The programme provides immediate and long term training opportunities for students, when they choose vocational education. They have greater labour opportunities and this kind of background is valued by industry.

The production sector has to take vocational education into consideration as this contributes to increased productivity and competitiveness. It also works as a production inclusion resource, providing labour opportunities for people who are economically and socially vulnerable.