

Turkey has more students than population of 150 countries: Minister

LONDON

The number of students Turkey has, is more than the population of 150 countries around the world, the country's education minister has said on May 24.

Speaking during the World Education Forum in London, Education Minister Mahmut Özer said that around 19 million students are getting education in preschools, elementary schools, middle schools and high schools.

According to the figures the minister provided, currently some 9 million students are being provided with higher education.

Özer stated that 21st century has witnessed very strong economic and social transformations. Pointing out that the unexpected pandemic, natural disasters and migrations have affected the education systems, the minister reminded that every education system has faced the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic since 2020.

“Schools teach and reduce the inequalities in the society; they provide the appropriate environment for raising a child physically, emotionally, socially and psychologically”, said Özer.

“Impressive developments have happened in the last 20 years”, he added. He also mentioned that the participation rates of education have increased at every stage, from pre-school to higher education.

The education minister emphasized on the importance of the qualities of teachers, highlighting that there are 1.2 million teachers in Turkey.

Minister said that they are trying to strengthen the qualifications of teachers as well as students.

He also underlined that the quality of education should be increased in order to provide the same quality of education to all students regardless of their socioeconomic background.

Özer noted that Turkey also provides education to Syrian refugees and that there are approximately 1 million Syrian students in the Turkish education system.

“Turkey is doing its best on behalf of the whole world. This is really important. You should thank Turkey, because Turkey not only provides education to its citizens, but also to immigrants”, he added.

Özer emphasized that their priority is to increase the quality of the Turkish education system, and withing this framework, they want to increase the participation in kindergarten to 100 percent in the initial stage, and then, secondly to reduce the differences in opportunities between schools.

He stated that they place great importance to vocational education and the participation of graduates in the labor market. He said that this has a very important place in balancing education systems.

“Education systems are as powerful as the teachers”, said the education minister.

In addition to these, Özer said that they are trying to encourage teachers in every way they can and that they have changed the law pertaining teachers. He emphasized that they provide all kinds of support to teachers.

Pointing out that there aren't any indicators that the current education systems did not bring productive results, he continued by saying that there are now school-based teacher training programs in Turkey and that teachers themselves can decide what training they need for their professional development.