5.1 million Children don’t go to school of which 63% are girls

ISLAMABAD - At least 5.1 million Pakistani children do not go to school of which 63 percent are girls, according to a report released by United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

The tenth Education for All Global Monitoring Report (GMR) of UNESCO recognised a dire need for investment in the future of young boys and girls in terms of spending, quality education and skill building initiatives.

The report was officially launched on Thursday to share Pakistan specific statistics and analysis with major educationists and policy makers.

Dr Kozue Kay Nagata in the opening remarks, quoted from the global speech of UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova and said, “I would like to dedicate this ceremony to Ms Malala Yousafzai, a young brave activist for the right of education for girls in Pakistan, assaulted last week, because she wanted to go to school”. Dr Nagata added, “For Pakistan as a nation, this year’s GMR has a special value”. The report revealed that the school age population of Pakistan was 197.5 million. Net enrolment ratio, in primary schools was 74% and 5.1 million children were out of school, 63% of which were girls. The report further said there were 7.27 million adolescents not attending school out of which 3.8 million were female.

UNESCO Senior Education Specialist Dr Roshan Chitrakar told the participants that Pakistan needed to tackle unemployment of the youth, and make them part of the productive labour force through training and education.

Arshad Saeed Khan elaborated in his presentation that according to the GMR only 40% of girls of age 15 or less were literate, which was projected to reach 60% by 2015. The issue thus needed special attention to eliminate gender disparity, he added.

In Pakistan, skill development (including teacher training) expenditure for the year 2008-9 was only 1% of the total education budget.