EU grants Euro 42.2 million aid for promotion of TVET, seminar told

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While stressing the need for promoting Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Pakistan, Technical and Vocational trainers at a seminar said that the country has the potential to become a major economic power, if 100 million youth under 24 years of age are equipped with technical and vocational knowledge.

Speaking here at a two-day workshop jointly organised by National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) and Unesco to identify challenges and formulate recommendations to make the TVET accessible and attractive for local youth so that they can easily have job opportunities. The workshop was informed that European Union has granted an assistance of Euro 42.2 million for the promotion of TVET in Pakistan. This assistance is directly being provided to NAVTTC for establishing technical institutions focusing remote areas.

They said that Pakistan at present is facing serious challenges of unemployment, as 20 million individuals without skills are unable to get any sort of employment. Qamar Uz Zaman Chaudhary, Federal Secretary of Ministry of Professional and Technical Training congratulated Unesco and NAVTTC along with other participants at the event. "I hope this conference would result in giving us tangible road map for TVET with general education."

"Youth is available to us as a window of opportunity; if we want to turn this youth bulge into demographic dividend they are to be equipped with marketable skills, otherwise soon we will find these young people crowded in street, desperate and threatening the peace of the country," said Muhammad Mumtaz Akhtar Kahloon, Chairman NAVTTC.

Dr Kozue Kay Nagata Unesco representative in Pakistan speaking on the occasion stressed the need not to undermine the potential of youth in Pakistan. "I can see the faces of youth, young women and men with their potential, and energy. This indicates demographic trend of Pakistan having potential human resources, which is pre-requisite for sustainable and competitive economic growth. If we can find a way to train them with modern skills and knowledge, up to part to the full fledged industrial countries, Pakistan's future is very bright" Unesco representative remarked.

He said that future of Pakistan could entertain both big size and ever growing consumer market with skilled manpower. Executive Director, NAVTTC, Tariq Shafi Chak urged to make TVET a part of general education by incorporating it in school curriculum. He said, "We need to find solutions which are integrated in existing frameworks, so we can utilise our future generation fruitfully."

In Pakistan, 32 percent of the total youth is illiterate where 9.5 % are unemployed and only 6
percent are equipped with technical skills. Due to these statistics, the 32 percent of uneducated youth with no vocational and life skills, make a lot of individuals who are vulnerable to unemployed.

While talking to participants, Education Program Specialist Unesco, Dr Roshan Chitrakar pointed out that there is need to change the present image of TVET in Pakistan saying, "We are right now in catch -22 situation; the image of Technical and Vocational training is still considered to be a second class education, as compared to formal education. The two-day workshop will look into different models of TVET, challenges and issues of expenditure, accessibility, sustainable funding and identify the causes of TVET failure in Pakistan.

Based on results drawn from the two-day workshop, the group of international and TVET experts will draw recommendations for vocational training policy reform in Pakistan. Participants included major entrepreneurs, TVET Specialists, Vocational Educationists and international youth support reform experts.

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