ISLAMABAD - Pakistan is currently having a youth population with more than 100 million, aged under 24. They can be an asset for the country if they are converted into human resources and engine for economic development of Pakistan; however they can be a liability if their skills and knowledge are not developed.

To address the issue of training and providing skill to them, National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) jointly organised a two-day national workshop to identify challenges and formulate recommendations to make Technical and Vocational Educational Training accessible and attractive for youth.

In welcoming address, representative UNESCO Islamabad Dr Kozue Kay Nagata stressed not to undermine the potential of young adults in Pakistan. “I can see the faces of youth, young women and men with their potential, and energy in this country. This indicates demographic trend of Pakistan. Pakistan has potential human resources, which is a prerequisite for sustainable and competitive nation’s economy”.

“If we can find a way to train them with modern skills and knowledge, up to part to the fully-fledged industrial countries, Pakistan’s future is very bright. Future Pakistan can entertain both big size of market and growing consumers,” he said.
Muhammad Mumtaz Akhtar Kahloon, Chairman NAVTEC feared: “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 to the peace of the country”.

In Pakistan, 32 percent of the total youth is illiterate, where 9.5 percent 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 or inactive with females forming the majority.

While talking to participants, Education Program Specialist UNESCO, Dr. Roshan Chitrakar pointed out the 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 in this country as compared to formal education. Due to absence of right perception, young people are not motivated to join TVET, at the same time its crucial to establish linkages of TVET with current industry.”

Executive Director, NAVTTC, Tariq Shafiq Chak urged to define the role of TVET in general education and to incorporate in school curriculum. He said, “we need to find solutions which are integrated in existing frameworks, so we can utilize our future generation fruitfully.” Qamaruz Zaman, Federal Secretary of Ministry of Professional and Technical Training, also addressed on the event.

The two day workshop will look into different models of TVET, challenges and issues of expenditure, accessibility, sustainable funding and identify the causes of failure of TVET in Pakistan. Based on results drawn from the two-day workshop, the group of international and TVET experts will draw recommendations and framework for policy level reform for vocational training in Pakistan. Participants include entrepreneurs, TVET specialists, vocational educationists and international youth support reform experts.