

**UN****Volunteers**

## **In FACT:**

### **UN Volunteers and the Millennium Development Goals**

MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

**Target: to halve the number of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water**

*Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will require the ingenuity, solidarity, and creativity of millions of ordinary people through voluntary action. Efforts on the part of national governments, supported by the international community, can only complement what ultimately will depend on the full involvement of people all over the world. Six billion people have something to contribute. Recognizing this fact is the first step on the road towards harnessing this vast resource in a global effort to meet the MDG targets.*

More than one billion people do not have access to safe drinking water and some two billion people lack access to proper sanitation services. In collaboration with development partners and working closely with communities and municipalities, the UN Volunteers (UNV) programme helps strengthen local capacity to ensure the sustainable use of, and equitable access to, natural resources. UNV also provides technical expertise in water and sanitation, supports efforts to generate income in an environmentally sustainable manner, and engages in activities such as environmental awareness campaigns and education programmes.

UNV's work in advocating volunteerism focuses on the promotion, recognition, facilitation and networking of volunteer action, including:

#### **Through individual volunteers, the UN Volunteers programme**

- Provides training to municipalities in natural resources management – water, land, forests, etc.;
- Extends technical support to sustainable water and sanitation programmes;
- Strengthens local capacity to ensure equitable access to natural resources through on-the-job training;
- Trains local administration officials in land tenure and ownership rights of poor people;
- Facilitates continuous dialogue on the management of local natural resources.

#### **Through volunteer-involving organizations (VIOs), the UN Volunteers programme**

- Facilitates the supervision by VIOs to ensure the sustainable use of environmental resources;
- Supports the participation of VIOs and local user associations in natural resources management;
- Encourages VIO initiatives that address entitlements of the poor to secure housing;
- Develops VIOs' capacity to use information and communications technology (ICT) for advocacy purposes and resource mobilization.

#### **Through volunteer networks, the UN Volunteers programme**

- Facilitates access of national networks of environmental VIOs to the environmental policy and programming decision-making process;

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- Stimulates and supports exchanges of experiences, knowledge and skills among environmental VIOs at local, national and international levels, especially through a greater use of ICT.

*UNV is the UN organization that supports the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals through the promotion of volunteerism, including the mobilization of volunteers. To this end, UNV provides the opportunity each year for more than 7,000 women and men - 75 per cent coming from developing countries - to support peace, relief and development initiatives in some 140 countries. In addition, it engages thousands of other individuals in the work of the United Nations through [www.onlinevolunteering.org](http://www.onlinevolunteering.org), and manages the [WorldVolunteerWeb.org](http://WorldVolunteerWeb.org), a portal that serves as a knowledge resource base on volunteerism worldwide.*

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