



UN

Volunteers

**Message from Ad de Raad, Executive Coordinator
United Nations Volunteer (UNV) programme on
International Volunteer Day, 5 December 2006**

This International Volunteer Day 2006 marks the fifth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers 2001 (IYV), which helped put volunteerism on national agendas and in the minds of many more people worldwide.

Every day millions of volunteers in every corner of the world contribute to the social and economic well being of their own communities.

Volunteering is an effective and an essential means to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and can only be achieved with the full involvement of people all over the world. Citizens need to take ownership of the MDGs and use their ingenuity and creativity if absolute poverty is to be reduced. Volunteer contributions, in particular at the national and local level, combined with efforts by national governments and supported by the international community, will significantly contribute to meeting the MDG targets. Volunteerism – when adequately supported and promoted – can be a highly effective channel through which the actions needed to achieve the MDGs can be mobilized.

Every single country has facets of volunteerism ingrained in its culture and traditions. It is a tremendous way for people to participate and make a difference. That is why many National Governments are increasingly building volunteer infrastructures and establishing the appropriate legal frameworks to support volunteerism. The power of volunteering for development is in its simplicity. While the concept is a very old one, what is new is the idea that volunteerism can and should be tapped and channeled towards meeting current development challenges. It may be ambitious, but so are volunteers.

The UN Volunteers program promotes volunteerism for development in its various forms --- mutual aid and self-help, philanthropy and service, advocacy and campaigning --- to support development initiatives in line with the UN Peace and Development Agenda.

IVD provides the best opportunity to showcase the contributions of volunteers to society. It is a chance to recognize voluntary action by organizations and individual volunteers. It is the time to consolidate networks of volunteers and complete worthwhile projects. Indeed, it is the time to act.

I salute that millions of volunteers around the world, including the 8, 100 UNV volunteers, who are taking action to make a difference in their communities and to contribute to build a better world for everyone.

United Nations Volunteers

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