

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

5 December 2006

Each day, millions of volunteers make a statement that despite everything – despite poverty and hatred, despite apathy and the seeming intractability of some of the challenges we face – people can change the world for the better.

Their ethos makes volunteerism one of the most visible – and most welcome – attributes of global citizenship. In ways both big and small, volunteers are transforming their communities and our world. And in this era of growing problems without passports – from HIV/AIDS to trafficking in people and contraband – they are providing grassroots solutions to humanity's most pressing needs.

Today, no such need is more urgent than attaining the Millennium Development Goals on schedule. Our world has the wealth and the vision to make poverty history, to end hunger, and to bring about development for all. Yet progress has proved uneven both within and between countries. Volunteer efforts can help fill the gap between declarations and delivery, and supplement broader national and international efforts to achieve the Goals.

Volunteerism is, of course, its own reward. But International Volunteer Day is an opportunity to remind all who seek selflessly to improve our world that their contributions are recognized. On my last International Volunteer Day as Secretary-General, I express my sincere gratitude to all men and women who share their skills and talents with the world, and hope that many more will follow their example.