

## Volunteerism: The backbone of dynamic development

Message from Kemal Dervis  
Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),  
on International Volunteer Day, 5 December 2006

If we are to accelerate progress toward achieving the MDGs and stay true to the promise the world made to build a better, fairer life for all, we must increase our effort to put in place the necessary policies and resources to achieve the MDGs. As demonstrated around the world, volunteers have a unique and important role to play as active participants in the development process. Volunteers, volunteering organizations, and volunteer networks are important resources that need to be properly recognized as legitimate development partners. Harnessing the energies and creativity of millions of people worldwide who want, as volunteers, to make distinctive contributions to development and peace will be critical in the years ahead as we approach the 2015 deadline for realizing the MDGs.

On this day we wish to commemorate the spirit of volunteerism and the commitment of individual volunteers giving their expertise to improve the lives of others. We are grateful to each and every volunteer, around the world, for making a valuable contribution in advancing human development, inclusive growth and sustainable peace.

We witnessed the effectiveness of volunteerism in responding to the earthquake in Pakistan last year. Thousands of volunteers from all over the country as well as from different parts of the world participated in relief efforts urgently needed on the field. This citizen's response led to the establishment of Pakistan's National Volunteer Movement. The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme gave its full support to the Government of Pakistan in helping to set up its National Volunteer Movement. Such accomplishments highlight UNV's essential role within both UNDP and the UN system in supporting volunteerism for development.

Through the effective mobilization of volunteers, local communities are engaged as agents of change making a real difference within their own neighborhoods.

Let me conclude by stressing my highest consideration and appreciation for the enormous contribution made to human development by the thousands of volunteers in communities around the world.