



REMARKS BY

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*Mr. President,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Associate Administrator,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Thank you Associate Administrator, for your warm words of welcome and for your support and appreciation of the UNV programme. We appreciate your effort to meet with UNV volunteers whenever you are in the field and UNV staff also very much appreciated your recent visit to Bonn.

*Distinguished delegates,*

It is my great pleasure to address you today on behalf of the United Nations Volunteers programme. I joined UNV as Executive Coordinator in February this year. I feel privileged to lead an organization with such an inspiring mandate, strong and supportive partners, and thousands of dedicated volunteers and staff all over the world. What struck me are the high levels of motivation of the staff at headquarters in Bonn and in the field as well as the energy and motivation of the UNV volunteers I met.

Before addressing some key aspects of our biennial report for the period 2006 – 2007, I would like to start with thanking my predecessor Ad de Raad for his hard work and dedication to UNV. The results of the past biennium are a reflection of his nine years with the organization.

Two years ago here in Geneva, you, the Executive Board, approved the UNV Business Model with its three areas of intervention, in short – Advocacy, Integration, and Mobilization for Volunteerism for Development. The business model as defined two years ago was a direct reflection of a change that was already taking root in UNV as guided by the 2002 and 2005 UN General Assembly resolutions. These resolutions were a follow-up on the International Year of Volunteers – IYV – in 2001, centred on the aims of recognition, facilitation, promotion and networking of volunteerism.

The growing recognition of the value of volunteerism for development is leading to a mindset change towards understanding volunteerism in a way reflective of the specificity of its culture. Therefore, we are committed to bringing that asset to the fore in achieving the development goals of each country, reducing poverty and in achieving the MDGs. Through volunteerism people participate in the development of their own communities and their own countries. Thereby, volunteerism builds local ownership and enduring capacity, in communities and institutions. UNV is proud to be able to work with your countries in achieving these objectives.

Your decision on the business model two years ago has proven to be an excellent foundation for the work being carried out by UNV today, and the 'distinctive' contributions we make through voluntary effort to sustainable human development and peace and security. A focused effort has been made since June 2006 to operationalize the business model into management procedures, processes and systems; and to include it fully into volunteer programming, UNV supported projects and in our partnerships, current ones and new ones.

The biennial report for the period 2006 and 2007 before you illustrates what we have accomplished in this context and gives extensive detail on the results of our work in support of the development needs of your countries, achieved in close partnership with over 25 UN entities. The report provides telling examples of how to realize the values of the United Nations through direct action, by promoting the principles of free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity.

This morning I will not repeat the details of the report, but would like to share with you a short overview of programme and management results. I would also like to give some more detail on, our increased efforts in the area of partnerships, on our funding base and the use of SVF funding on how we look at gender both programmatically and organizationally, and I would like to conclude by looking to some of the challenges and opportunities ahead, including the follow-up on IYV with the UN General Assembly.

### ***Programme results***

The operationalization of the three areas of intervention of the business model and the related key results brought greater coherence to UNV's programmatic and volunteer activities. Our systems, processes and procedures are now being organized within Advocacy, Integration and Mobilization. Consequently, our planning in support of development and peace has become more results oriented and we are improving the ability to measure these results.

UNV's three areas of distinctive contributions; access to opportunities and services, inclusion and participation and community mobilization for voluntary action, serve as a guide for programming and partnerships. Measuring impact through the lenses of the areas of distinctive contributions has proven to be more difficult than we expected in terms of attribution. We made a dedicated effort to detail the results framework so that it permeates all of our work, including such areas as the rostering process, volunteer terms of references, and a complete overhaul of the Volunteer Reporting System which enables each volunteer to report directly on their work.

I would like to start with the mobilization of volunteers for development, which includes the mobilization of UNV volunteers who currently serve as national and international specialists with over 25 UN entities. Trends show a steady growth in the numbers of UNV volunteers over the last two decades; the number of UNV volunteers more than doubled when compared to the 3,620 volunteers deployed in 1997. This number has stabilized in the last few years to around 7,500 UNV volunteers annually – they continue to be the core of our work.

However, in addition, we are increasingly supporting the mobilization of other volunteers, through projects, programmes and new initiatives, and support to national volunteer schemes and services.

With respect to the international UNV volunteers, in 2007 we launched and implemented the updated Conditions of Service. Following from this we have now started a review of the national UNV volunteer modality, with a focus on development

impact and operational coherence. In this context, and as expressed by the UNDP Administrator, we cannot make any concessions on the security for our volunteers.

Over the past two years in particular, there has been a strong growth in the areas of peacekeeping, disaster and humanitarian response. Placing it in the context of the UNDP practice areas, about 47 percent of UNV's programme activities revolve around crisis prevention and recovery, while 32 percent of our activities related specifically to poverty reduction and achieving the MDGs.

Environment is currently a relatively small part, around 2 percent, of our work. However, this partially reflects a need for improved categorization of our volunteers, as the ones working in for example disaster risk management and reduction, as well as early warning systems, are currently not included. UNV would like to strengthen its work in the area of the environment and climate change because of the tremendous challenges the world is facing, as recognized by the Secretary General and the increased global consensus. I would like to quote the Secretary General from his statement on the occasion of IVD last year. I quote:

*Voluntary action is also essential in our global effort to address climate change, which poses a serious threat to our ability to reach the Millennium Development Goals. [...] We need people everywhere to volunteer for this challenge, and to help communities mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. Voluntary action is also critical to build domestic solutions for sustainable economic growth, and to develop capacities to prepare for and respond to natural disasters.*

As such we aspire to a greater engagement of UNV volunteers in this area, especially supporting grass-roots and community level climate-change mitigation, adaptation and other environmental activities, building on existing partnerships and the UNV community-level knowledge of disaster risk management. In the next few months we will review and strengthen our roster including specific functional categories to match the needed professional profiles.

An important characteristic of the UNV volunteers that I would like to highlight is the fact that they epitomize the South-South transfer of skills and knowledge. They build capacity and exchange innovative practices that support national development. In 2007, 77 percent of our UNV volunteers came from developing countries, and more than 30 percent volunteered in their own countries. Volunteering is an opportunity for individuals to develop their potential and capacity as global citizens.

As I mentioned, in addition to the mobilization of UNV volunteers, we continue to support more diverse opportunities for the engagement of volunteers, through our own programming and through our partners. An example of this is the increasing numbers of online volunteers providing their expertise through the UNV online volunteering service. In 2007 alone, we facilitated 2,800 online volunteers carrying out 3,816 assignments, a 30 percent increase from 2006.

Another example is our work in support of national volunteer schemes and services and the integration of volunteerism for development in the work of partners. This work addresses country needs and our work is responsive to the specific country realities. More work is needed to quantify the numbers of other volunteers and attribute their mobilization directly to UNV programming.

This brings me to the two other aspects of the business model, Integration and Advocacy for volunteerism for development. Integration translates at the country level into building national capacity for volunteerism such as through, national volunteer schemes and centres, legislation, protocols and strengthening of national institutions and organizations. You will find a number of detailed country examples in the report as well as in our new Annual Report.

Our increased focus on integration has given us an opportunity to better support and participate in country level processes and activities such as; joint programming collaborative planning, advocacy activities on MDGs, and the role of communities to achieve localized MDGs. I will come back to this in more detail later.

Advocacy for volunteerism for development focuses on advancing recognition of the value of volunteerism at the national level and at the international level with other volunteer cooperating and sending organizations. Groundbreaking work is being done in cooperation with a large academic institution on measuring the value of volunteerism in economic terms; UNV is supporting the pilots in a number of countries.

The business model with its results framework and the corporate management provide indicators within an RBM strategy, we recognize that there is nonetheless still need for a continued refinement of indicators, to allow a more precise quantification and attribution of results. At the same time we would also like to keep track of the richness of the experiences we have in all our programmes and partnerships, while capturing results in an aggregate form. To this end we are dedicating time to achieve harmonization of indicators among the several internal and UNDP frameworks available to guide our work. I give high priority to this and therefore have established a clear timeline for its accomplishment.

I would like to take the opportunity to respond to the specific question raised yesterday by the President of the Board, concerning UNV's support to capacity building in the context of the Sudan Country Programme Document. First let me say that the UNV programme in Sudan was one of the first and was established in 1973, and the first national UNV scheme was launched in Sudan in 1991. UNV has fielded thousands of national and international UNV volunteers in Sudan. Today, UNV supports peace and development activities in the most challenging regions of the country, including Darfur, the South, and other areas such as Kadugli and Abyei. The number of UNV volunteers in Sudan has reached a very high level of approximately 600, which is expected to exceed 800 by the end of this year. The deployment of volunteers is in collaboration with UNDP, UNMIS, UNAMID and a number of other UN and national entities. The programme in Sudan is the largest in the Arab States, and also one of the largest globally. UNV will continue in Sudan to support UNDP and the UN System at large through an agreed results based approach. It is discussed as part of the UNDAF process and UNV is committed to focus on capacity building.

### ***Management Results***

From a management perspective, section III of the report shows how UNV took significant steps towards strengthening corporate management, oversight and accountability by developing a corporate management plan. As part of that, five

strategic management priorities were identified, covering the entire scope of UNV programming and management results: policy coherence; programme results; capacity alignment and enhancement; accountability framework; and partnerships. All of this was done to enhance UNV's support to UN-wide efforts to enhance aid effectiveness and harmonization.

The current Country Office Team configuration that relies on UNV volunteers as Programme Officers seems to be under stress in meeting the challenges placed by the complexity of the changing institutional environment in the UN Reform context. UNV wishes to respond to these challenges and thus an in-depth review of our country presence has been initiated and will proceed concurrently with an alignment of the capacity needed at UNV headquarters to support our country operations.

Over the past decade the size of UNV's operations increased considerably both in volunteer numbers as well as in complexity while the size of the staff increased only marginally. This growth in volume has been supported through efficiency gains achieved from rationalization, simplification and streamlining of its business processes and the conditions of service of the UNV volunteers, as well with the effective use of technology and systems for programme support, management and administration. More specifically, the level of activities in terms of overall number of annual volunteer assignments and financed from all sources of 7,521 in 2007, representing a growth of about 90 percent compared to the annual number of volunteer assignments during the 1998/1999 period. During the same period, however, total BSB financial resources (both RR and OR) combined in nominal terms grew by 38 percent only and staff posts increased by 10 percent only (which represents 10 posts – 9 professional and 1 General Service).

UNV has diligently maintained a buffer or reserve of other (or EB) resource balance and will continue to maintain the level. Any income raised over and above the recommended buffer is being utilized for special initiatives to enhance our work such as improved knowledge management and building the capacity of UNV staff and supporting staff in areas such as project management, procurement, human resources and financial management.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all donors for their support – particularly the non-traditional donors and those donors who have assured a longer term predictability of their funding. Details on funding are available in the Statistical and Financial Information section of the UNV Annual Report. We count on your continued financial support.

We do believe, however, that all countries are donors to UNV through the human resources they provide, their nationals who serve as UNV volunteers. This contribution is crucial to the success of the UNV programming. Examples of these successes are captured in report and the Annual Report.

The Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) is essential for UNV, because it provides an opportunity to pilot new initiatives and establish new partnerships globally. The SVF continues to support pilot interventions and research to promote volunteerism for development.

## **Partnerships**

UNV has a wide range of partners. We cooperate with governments, UNDP and other UN entities, civil society and local communities. UNV supports the development of national capacity and volunteerism infrastructure, the mobilization of local volunteers, and encourages volunteerism in all its diverse indigenous forms.

UNV further encourages the integration of volunteering into UNDP country programme action plans, UNDAFs and other United Nations system initiatives, as well as in programmes of development partners.

The UN system also draws on the spirit of volunteerism. UNV continues to have strong partnerships with DPKO, UNDP, UNHCR and WFP.

The work of UNV is increasingly gaining recognition. In the past two years alone, references to UNV and volunteerism were included in 41 UN Development Assistance Frameworks and 29 UNDP Country Programme Action Plans. UNV volunteers represent a vital component of collective peacekeeping efforts, constituting 30 percent of international civilian personnel in peacekeeping missions. They enhance efforts to achieve lasting peace and stability in countries suffering from political insecurity or those recovering from conflict. About 1,200 UNV volunteers worked in humanitarian response in 2007, primarily with UNHCR, WFP and OCHA. These UNV volunteers are a vital component for the achievement of these agencies' results.

We are pleased to report to you today that UNV is partnering with the Peace Building Commission Support Office. We are deploying UNV volunteers to support the field presence of the Commission in its mandated countries.

## **Gender**

In 2006, the Executive Board requested UNV to improve the gender ratio of UNV volunteers. UNV has developed a Gender Action Plan drawing from the new UNDP Gender Strategy. The plan covers both institutional and programme actions. Over the last few years we had a ratio of 36 percent female volunteers and 64 percent male. To improve this, we have increased the ratio of women in the roster of volunteers to 45 percent in 2007, up from 40 percent in 2006. To ensure a commensurate impact on the number of serving female UNV volunteers, further explicit gender policies are being introduced at the submission stage with at least one female candidate included in every short list forwarded to partner United Nations entities. However, the ratio is dependent on the final selection of UNV volunteers made by partner agencies.

An area where we exceed aspirations in gender parity is among online volunteers where the ratio is 60 percent female, 40 percent male. Also, at headquarters, UNV has surpassed the UN gender balance goals, with a current ratio of 59 percent female staff to 41 percent male. The ratio of females at senior management level is 71 percent.

On the programme side, we have engaged in an initiative with UNIFEM, which focuses on a gender and volunteerism study in the Arab States. And UNV has engaged in collaborations with the UNDP gender unit that will focus on developing training on gender mainstreaming module for our programming staff.

### ***Follow-up on IYV***

Since the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) in 2001, UNV has experienced continued growth in the scope of the organization's mandate and in the numbers of UNV volunteers.

UNV was designated as the UN focal point in the process leading up to the review by the General Assembly, at its 63rd session, of follow-up to IYV 2001, including proposals for marking IYV+10. It is anticipated that IYV+10 will provide momentum for significantly scaling up efforts to mainstream volunteerism for development and peace, with a corresponding impact on the work of UNV.

In September of this year, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will present the second report to the UN General Assembly on follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers 2001 and the status of implementation of the IYV recommendations. This report will inform Member States of the status of implementation of IYV outcome recommendations aimed at greater recognition, networking, facilitation and promotion of volunteerism around the world as an asset for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The report will also include proposals on ways of marking IYV+10 in 2011.

### ***Concluding***

I would like to conclude by acknowledging all volunteers including the UNV volunteers for their dedication to development and peace. I thank all governments with which we have the privilege to work and all donor countries for their continuing support. I would also like to thank UNDP for its global support and all UN entities and other partners with whom we cooperate.

I am looking forward to receiving your support and hearing your comments, as these will help us strengthen the UNV programme.

UNV will continue to do its utmost to effectively support achieving the MDGs and reducing poverty through volunteerism for development, in particular in the context of the global environmental challenges extra efforts will be necessary.

The United Nations Volunteers programme is inspired by the conviction that volunteerism has the potential to transform the pace and nature of development, and by the idea that everyone can contribute their time and energy towards peace and development. We are privileged to be able to work with you, governments, and with other partners, to advocate for volunteerism, integrating volunteerism into development planning and mobilizing volunteers. This enormous potential of volunteerism should be an inspiration to us all, because volunteerism for development translates inspiration into action, and the action and dedication of volunteers again inspires. This idea has become the title of the latest Annual Report – '**Inspiration in Action**'. And, delivering on this potential is UNV's mission.