



## Press Release 新闻稿



# Harness the spirit of Olympic volunteerism as a force for development

## UN and BOCOG recognize contributions of volunteers to the Games and development

**7 August, Beijing**--The United Nations in China and the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG) Volunteer Department hosted a high-level celebration on the eve of the opening of the 29<sup>th</sup> Olympiad to recognize the service of Beijing's volunteers both in preparations for the Games and contributing to development in China.

"No matter who wins the most medals at the Games, one thing is clear – these volunteers will win the hearts and minds of visitors to Beijing," stated Achim Steiner, United Nations Under Secretary-General and Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). "Today it is our hope that the deeds and stories of the Olympic volunteers, both at the Games and in service to their communities, can inspire millions of others to volunteer."

Four Olympic volunteers, ranging from 15 to 85 years old, recounted their experience in not only preparing for the Games but also in volunteering to serve their communities. The volunteers have been making a difference in the run up to the Games by serving to assist victims of the Wenchuan earthquake, leading environmental programmes and mentoring migrant youth living in cities.

Khalid Malik, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in China said, "by dedicating their time and talents in the service of others, these Olympic volunteers illustrate the powerful role that volunteers can play in assisting vulnerable groups of society." Mr. Malik read on behalf of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon a statement of encouragement and appreciation addressed to the Beijing Olympic Volunteers.

Shen Qianfan, Deputy Director of BOCOG Volunteer Department and Vice Secretary General of the Beijing Youth League (BYL) summarized the efforts of mobilizing over 500,000 volunteers to ensure a successful Olympic Games. Moreover, he pledged that BYL will make major efforts to harness the spirit of Olympic volunteerism as a force for development after the Games.

"One of the key legacies of the Games should be the increased participation of Beijing and Chinese citizens in volunteerism. Volunteers make real and significant contributions to social development and we will provide increased opportunities for meaningful ways to serve to their communities and country."



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Former Olympic Champion Yang Yang volunteered as Master of Ceremonies of the high-profile celebration and was joined by Zhou Xun, award winning actress and UNDP China National Goodwill Ambassador. "It is great to see people of all ages volunteering in events as important as the Olympics, and also making real differences to peoples' lives, especially those who need it most," said Ms Zhou.

The British Minister for London and the Olympics Tessa Jowell encouraged the Olympic Volunteers to continue their service to others after the Games. Liang Wei, a senior BOCOG Official and member of the Standing Committee of the CPC Beijing Municipal Committee was joined by Dong Hong, Deputy Director General of China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges (CICETE), in delivering closing remarks of appreciation of the role of volunteerism in supporting the Games and helping others.

The Olympic volunteer programme showcases the strong emergence of volunteer culture in China. Over one million people applied to serve as Olympic volunteers and over half a million were selected to serve in the venues or as 'city volunteers' at over 450 volunteer stands across the capital. The skills learned in recruiting, training, motivating and managing the volunteers represent an enormous resource available for volunteer programmes in development fields such as environmental awareness, education and health after the Games.

**News photos of the event can be downloaded at the UNDP China website: [www.undp.org.cn](http://www.undp.org.cn), under 'Recent Press Release'.**

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