

**Statement delivered by Ms. Margarete Sobral
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Concerning the United Nations Volunteers Program
On the occasion of the UNDP Executive Board, Annual Session 2010**

**Mr. President,
Members of the UNDP Executive Board,
Madam Executive Coordinator,
Dear friends and colleagues**

On behalf of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, Under-Secretaries-General Le Roy and Malcorra, I have the honour to address the 2010 Annual Session of the Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA on the collaboration between the United Nations Department of Field Support and the United Nations Volunteer Programme. The Department of Field Support extends its utmost support and appreciation to the UNV Programme, in particular to Ms. Helen Clark, the UNDP Administrator, and Ms. Flavia Pansieri, the UNV Executive Coordinator, for the invaluable support that UNV and its UN volunteers continue to provide to peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

Mr. President,

In recent years, the United Nations experienced an unprecedented growth in peacekeeping operations throughout the world. With this growth came extraordinary demands for the mobilization of talent to meet the needs of countries in the aftermath of conflict. The UNV Programme has been an essential strategic and operational partner in helping to promote peace and to deliver assistance to countries in need. The UNVs themselves embody the best qualities of effective UN peacekeepers: self-sacrificing, courageous, energetic and committed to the ideals of the Organization. In the 2008-2009 biennium, over 6,000 UN Volunteers served in peacekeeping operations and special political missions. Today, there are over 2,700 Volunteers serving in 15 field missions, often in the most difficult and dangerous conditions. This collaboration, sadly, also comes with some losses.

I would like to pay special tribute our three UNV colleagues who died as a result of the earthquake in Haiti earlier this year, to the UN Volunteer who died in a plane crash in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2008 and to the UNV who was kidnapped, and thankfully released, after more than three months in Darfur last year.

Mr. President,

The collaboration between the Department of Field Support and the UNV Programme, now in its 18th year, is an integral part of peacekeeping. UN

Volunteers play a critical role in supporting the implementation of mission mandates, and are engaged in all aspects of peacekeeping activities whether it is through elections, disarmament and reintegration, civil and political affairs activities, human rights monitoring, gender affairs, public information efforts, medical assistance, administration and management and logistics. Over the last two years, UNVs provided particularly critical support in our operations in Haiti, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Afghanistan.

UN Volunteers provide not only skills and expertise, but with their commitment to benefiting society at large, they also bring a unique dimension to peacekeeping. We recognize the potential of a more strategic role for UN Volunteers in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, moving beyond the traditional functions for which UNVs have been used in peacekeeping, to helping to build national capacity in post-conflict countries, for example, through training and mentoring of nationals, and expanding the use of volunteers in core peacebuilding areas.

In this regard, we are very pleased that a joint evaluation of the collaboration between the Department of Field Support and the UNV Programme will begin next month. This evaluation is expected to provide useful information and insights that will help strengthen and shape future collaboration. In the meantime, the Department of Field Support and the UNV Programme continue to work together to jointly review our policies and practices and are working to update and amend the current global Memorandum of Understanding.

Mr. President,

As we approach the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers in 2011, and the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the UNV Programme, the Department of Field Support would like to acknowledge the role UNV has played in advocating and promoting the role of volunteerism. We fully support UNV's ambitious plan for the 2011 International Year of the Volunteer +10 and stand ready to support in any way possible the IVY+10 message and activities through our field offices.

We also wish to acknowledge the contribution to peace that each individual UN Volunteer has made during their service with a UN peacekeeping operations or special political mission, and to thank them for their dedication and professionalism. On behalf of Ms. Malcorra, I also wish to extend our thanks to the Board, Board Members, Ms. Clark and Ms. Pansieri.

I thank you, Mr. President.