



REMARKS BY FLAVIA PANSIERI
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*Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,
Associate Administrator,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Thank you Associate Administrator, for your introduction of the United Nations Volunteers' biennial report for 2008 and 2009. It has been a pleasure working with you since your appointment earlier this year and I am looking forward to working further on strengthening the UNV-UNDP partnership. We very much appreciate your and the Administrator's commitment, and your recognition of the role of volunteerism in peace and development, and of the important work that UNV volunteers deliver on the ground for the UNDP and the UN system as a whole. I am pleased that the Administrator has been meeting with volunteers during her visits to the field.

I would like to start by noting that it continues to be a privilege for me to lead the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme. The UNV mandate is very inspiring, and the UNV programme provides an opportunity for motivated, committed and experienced individuals to contribute substantively to national development goals of programme countries by contributing to the work of UNDP and 22 other United Nations organizations, as well as 19 United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions.

Before continuing, I would like to pay tribute to the five UNV volunteers we lost so tragically in the past year: two volunteers were killed during the attack on the UN guest house in Kabul, Afghanistan in October last year; three volunteers lost their lives in the devastating earthquake in Haiti in January this year.

These five individuals gave their lives for the cause of the United Nations while others experienced life-threatening situations. Many of our UNV volunteers work on the frontlines of peace and development, in difficult circumstances and often in remote locations; they do this because they believe in the ideals of the United Nations. As UN staff and UN system, together with you - our partner countries - we have the obligation to provide them with the best possible support, protection and security to do their work.

This morning I would like to highlight some of the key programmatic achievements of the UNV programme. I do not intend to repeat the Administrator's Report which is before you, but rather to share some general remarks. I would also like to bring to your attention our Annual Report for 2009, which we are launching this week. This Annual Report complements the Administrator's Report with the voices of the volunteers themselves. It also contains the 2009 programmatic statistics. Furthermore, I would like to touch upon the preparatory work under way for the commemoration of the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10) and how UNV is preparing itself for the coming years both from



an organizational management perspective as well as in terms of programmatic and advocacy opportunities. Lastly I would like to briefly inform you on our funding base and the UNV Special Voluntary Fund.

PROGRAMME RESULTS

The UNV business model, which the Board approved in June 2006, continues to drive our work. The three areas of intervention as they were defined then – advocacy, integration and mobilization – were mainstreamed within our programmes. The results framework, which is provided as an annex to this year's Administrator's Report, was further refined and slightly reformulated into the following three organizational outcome areas: (a) global recognition of volunteerism for peace and development; (b) integration of volunteerism into peace and development programmes; and (c) mobilization of increasing numbers and diversity of volunteers contributing to peace and development. The report before you follows this structure and reports on the more detailed key results under each outcome area, similarly to the previous biennial report.

Results can be quantitative and qualitative. I would therefore like to start with some of the important numbers. In the biennium about 7,600 UNV volunteers were mobilized annually, of which 5,100 international and 2,500 national volunteers. The largest number of UNV volunteers worked with the Department of Field Support (DFS), UNDP and UNHCR, followed, in smaller numbers, by WFP, UNICEF, and UNFPA.

UNV volunteers are global citizens; they are from 163 different nationalities and are assigned to 136 different countries. Engaging as volunteers through UNV provides them with a platform for global solidarity. When analyzing in more detail this global exchange of technical capacity, in 2009, close to 3,600 international UNV volunteers came from 105 developing countries. UNV volunteers are thus a key mechanism to support South-South cooperation. In financial terms, they represent 67 per cent of UNV's financial size. In 2009, the ten countries of origin for the largest number of UNV volunteers were Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, India, Kenya, Liberia, Nepal, Philippines, Uganda, and Sierra Leone.



Onsite volunteers

UNV volunteers are often the 'feet on the ground' of the United Nations, and that is where development results need to be achieved. In other words, volunteers act locally to implement the development thinking that takes place globally. By virtue of their close integration within the programmes of other UN entities, the results they produce are integral part of the programmatic results of these entities, and aligned with their priorities. Whether in a peacekeeping mission engaged in electoral support, in a humanitarian operation assisting refugees, or in a development programme promoting local governance or community-based adaptation to climate change, in all these examples, and many more that could be mentioned, the role of UNV volunteers is to contribute to the results of these different entities.

Moreover, UNV volunteers also pursue another objective. In addition to their technical and substantive contributions, it is their engagement on a voluntary basis, their ability to act at the local and community level, their commitment to lead by example and encourage collective participation in peace and development processes, that represent the contribution they bring to the build up of social capabilities, and the sustainability of the programmes they support.

Let me start with just a few highlights of the results produced by volunteers in promoting peace. I shall then turn to results in development projects and programmes.

With close to one third of civilian peacekeeping personnel being UNV volunteers, it is clear that the very functioning of peacekeeping operations heavily depend on their contributions. More importantly, the civilian face in a peacekeeping mission, whether as civil affairs or human rights officers in areas that are trying to recover from violent conflict, or as voter education or local governance specialists, is the face of a volunteer. It is often UNV volunteers – who engage communities, build mutual trust and contribute to rebuilding the compact between state and citizens – that the violent conflict has broken. It is also volunteers, who encourage participation in democratic election processes, and who assist communities in the early stages of recovery, instilling the vision of a peaceful future.

Similarly, UNHCR is also relying on UNV volunteers, who represent close to 17 per cent of its field presence, for the management of refugee camps for international refugees and internally displaced persons.

Volunteers have also been successful in helping communities prepare and protect themselves against natural disasters, encouraging the development of community based preparedness and response plans, and increasing communities' resilience in emergencies.



In its work with development partners, UNV is often called upon to expand the outreach of national institutions, to promote access to basic services and people's participation.

In democratic governance, UNV volunteers, in quite a few countries like in Lao PDR, Malawi, Niger and Tanzania, worked in local governance and local service delivery projects; contributing to reducing poverty, improving access to basic services and promoting local governance.

But UNV is not just a provider of volunteers. It is also a provider of technical advice to governments, for the establishment of their own volunteer schemes and modalities. During the biennium we worked with 19 Governments in setting up national volunteer schemes. In Burkina Faso, the national volunteer programme grew from 100 volunteers in 2008, to 600 volunteers in 2009. UNV also facilitated a study visit from the Government of the Gambia to Burkina Faso to learn from their experience.

As I already mentioned, volunteers very often act locally, at community level, and there is where their impact is most felt. But when taken together, this local action can send a powerful message. Last year, to celebrate International Volunteer Day on 5 December, UNV launched a campaign 'Volunteering for our Planet' and demonstrated that volunteerism is mobilizing large numbers of people at the local level to take action for environmental protection, through local organizations, community activities, and grassroots initiatives. Over a two-month period, and using social networking technology, we asked people to register the number of hours they had volunteered for the environment. We were probably the first ones to be surprised by the intensity of the response. Over 1.5million hours were registered on the website.

The 'Volunteering for our Planet' campaign also resulted in many local initiatives for IVD. I was pleased to participate in the IVD beach clean-up in Monrovia, Liberia, together with the mayor and hundreds of volunteers. The campaign also showed that volunteerism for the environment is very strong in developing countries as the top five countries registering volunteer hours were India, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan and Philippines.

The UNV volunteers we mobilize through projects with UN partners, Government and civil society organizations, very often produce a large multiplier effect. An example is the 'Teach India' campaign. Four national UNV volunteers and one international UNV Programme Officer, partnered with the *Times of India* to promote the teaching of English among disadvantaged groups. Over 100,000 volunteers were mobilized. An added element of volunteerism was highlighted by this project – social cohesion – as it brought educated citizens directly into contact with the poorest. This activity also shows that building innovative volunteerism partnerships, in this case with the private sector, can contribute to increasing primary education and thus to achieving the MDGs.



Therefore, investing in volunteerism is a cost-effective way to accelerate the attainment of the MDGs. I wish to stress, in this context, that volunteers need to be managed professionally and that this requires investing resources and capacity building.

Programmatically UNV has also strengthened gender mainstreaming in its programme activities. UNV volunteers promoted gender equality, specifically in protection, empowerment, women's rights advocacy, and community-centred development. Annually, 75 UNV volunteers served as gender specialists. UNICEF and UNFPA mainstreamed and replicated the UNV project to combat female genital mutilation in the Sudan. The final evaluation of this project was selected as a pilot for the United Nations Evaluation Group Handbook on integrating human rights and gender into evaluations.

Online volunteers

Complementing on site mobilization, the Online Volunteering service experienced remarkable growth in 2009, after a complete overhaul of the internet platform and inclusion of French and Spanish websites, besides English. First, the figures, in 2009, 9,427 online volunteers completed 14,313 assignments, a growth of respectively 152 and 172 per cent compared to 2008.

Online volunteers have proven a valuable source of capacity development in the South, with 87 per cent of assignments benefitting civil society organizations. Fifty-three per cent of online volunteers were women. Sixty-two per cent of volunteers were from the South, thereby showing that online south-south cooperation is strong and that the digital divide can be bridged.

I would also like to highlight that 2 per cent of online volunteers self-reported having disabilities – showing that volunteering provides a chance for social inclusion of people with a disability through the internet.

The scope of online volunteering is as wide as our imagination can span and there are many examples of results achieved through online volunteering. I would like to focus on one which is indicative of how online volunteering can really bring together individuals to produce a lasting result.

Since 2006, over 600 online volunteers have supported the UNDP International Poverty Centre for Inclusive Growth in Brazil. They conducted a global search to identify poverty research institutions and organizations worldwide and produced a directory of 2,800 such research centres. The total volunteer time that the Poverty Centre received online is estimated at about 12 persons/years. Each individual volunteer,



by bringing his or her knowledge of the local context and situation, contributed to the creation of this unique repository of knowledge on poverty research.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

IYV+10

The United Nations General Assembly in resolution 63/153 invited governments, the media, civil society, the private sector, development partners and the United Nations to mark in 2011 the 10th anniversary of the successful International Year of Volunteers at global, regional and national levels. The General Assembly requested UNV to be the focal point for marking these celebrations. We see this as a major opportunity to advocate for volunteerism and reinvigorate the four pillars of IYV: promotion, recognition, facilitation, and networking, as well as to take stock of the worldwide state of volunteerism.

In October last year we convened a first meeting with a group of stakeholders that included international and regional volunteer-involving organizations, civil society organizations, Governments, and several United Nations organizations. A vision statement was produced and a 'global call for action' was made. UNV and other partners are already working on the preparation of a number of activities. UNV is coordinating exchange of information and joint activities with this group of stakeholders by using the Teamworks application. We are also revamping, with private sector volunteer support, the 'world volunteer web' to continue to serve as the global information hub for IYV+10.

The success of IYV+10 will largely depend on the initiative and involvement of national actors. We will work with them in national coordinating structures, national committees and multi-stakeholder focal points, for the advancement of the volunteerism agenda during the year and beyond.

UNV is also working on a 'State of the world's volunteerism report' to be launched towards the end of 2011. The intention of the report is to provide a global overview of volunteerism, to stimulate debate, and enhance the perception of volunteerism.

We are looking forward to a fruitful cooperation with many of our partner organizations in the UN system and to have many activities at the country level organized by national committees and Governments. In this context we would like to keep you informed and present to you the progress on activities during at the Annual Session of the EB next year.



Promoting knowledge

If we want to understand what volunteerism is, and what it can achieve, the best source of knowledge are our volunteers themselves. Through our volunteer reporting system we intend to close the feedback loop from the local to the global level. We will also introduce new technologies and social networking to support this sharing of knowledge and expertise, supported at our headquarters by a revamped section on volunteer knowledge and innovation.

Our knowledge management approach is aligned with UNDP. We are part of the Teamworks pilot this year, and will be rolling it out to all our staff next year. Additionally, we will also be using this new technology to connect to all our former volunteers – which we are now testing with all former UNV volunteers in Ukraine.

Gender

Gender distribution of UNV volunteers has been an important concern of this Board. UNV is committed to progress towards a balanced gender ratio and we made progress in this area during the biennium. For example, 43 per cent of national UNV volunteers are female; in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States the percentage of female volunteers, both national and international, stands at 57, and in Latin America and the Caribbean at 48 per cent.

I have to acknowledge, however, that increasing the number of female UNV volunteers continues to be a challenge. Overall, we had a slight improvement in 2009, and reached 37 per cent representation of female volunteers. Balanced gender representation in UN Missions continues to remain elusive, as female international volunteers there represent only 28 percent. We should consider however some contributing factors: UN Missions operate in post-crisis, non-family and difficult circumstances, where the security situation often poses a special threat to women. It would be morally unacceptable to pursue a gender distribution target, which would expose women to the risk of gender-based violence. Progress in this area will therefore continue to be slow. At the same time, and whenever the situation permits, UNV always submits at least one female UNV candidate for any position and maintains a dialogue with UN system colleagues to ensure increasingly balanced representation. This is a priority area for UNV, and we shall continue to exercise concerted efforts together with our partners.



Results-based management and evaluation

During the biennium we deepened our understanding and practice of results-based management. We refined the key results of our business model, introduced tighter definition of indicators, and invested in staff learning; we continue to improve our results reporting, while being mindful of the challenge of properly determining attribution.

Evaluation continued to be an essential tool for organizational learning. We conducted a synthesis of all evaluations undertaken during the decade, 2000-2009, to draw lessons for future programming. We also commissioned an independent review of our evaluation function that positively assessed the evaluation standards we apply.

ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

A vibrant organization needs processes and procedures to operate efficiently and promote accountability without stifling creativity. Since the International Year of Volunteers in 2001 the UNV programme has grown in the number of UNV volunteers, as well as in the complexity of its mandate. Yet the structure of the organization had not been significantly reviewed.

It was time to change, and we had to do that in a manner that enabled maximum staff engagement, in line with the participatory culture of the organization. We called the process 'Changing Together'. As an organization, we were fortunate to change from a growth perspective in order to invigorate the organization and to improve the programmatic focus and client orientation vis-à-vis our partners, UN organizations and programme countries.

Similarly to the seven workstreams UNDP has defined to focus on, our change process last year zoomed in on our key business practices: volunteer management, project management, procurement, partnerships and communication. Staff were involved in cross-functional process review teams and made recommendations on process improvements and on structural changes.

Having the best UNV volunteers to serve the work of our partners continues to be the mainstay of our work. Therefore, the entire volunteer management cycle was reviewed and strengthened from rostering, to identification, submission, through to placement and support. New tools were developed and others are still under development. Key to this process was the creation of a specialized section solely focusing on screening and identification of international UNV volunteers.



With respect to national UNV volunteers, we conducted a comprehensive review of the national UNV volunteer modality in 10 countries: Botswana, Brazil, Ecuador, India, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Sudan, Syria, Uganda, and Zambia. The review pointed out that governments and host organizations agreed that national UNV volunteers effectively supported achieving national development priorities and UNDAF targets.

The organizational structure was sharpened and focused on our two main groups of clients; we now have a Peace Division that supports the work of the peacekeeping, peacebuilding and humanitarian partners; and a Development Division working with the UN development organizations. We have also implemented a portfolio management system to ensure that, while respecting the differences in partners' mandate and operational modalities, we support them in their work by applying common principles and procedures.

We reviewed our approach to project management, and have been moving systematically away from stand-alone projects, in the direction of multi-agency programmes within the context of an UNDAF, and in line with the principles of Delivering as One.

Communication and partnerships have also been realigned, with the aim of ensuring that programmatic needs of partner countries drive the partnership activities and our communication messages. Finally, we have centralized procurement functions in a unit staffed with fully certified and experienced travel and procurement personnel.

An organizational change process poses challenges to a small organization such as UNV. Business has to continue as usual, even as staff time is required for business process analysis and consultation and consensus-building. While change often affects organizational output, we were able to maintain performance on a level compared to the previous year, in terms of programme delivery, volunteer mobilization and programme development. This would never have been possible, without the unfailing support of all the staff at UNV. I would like to thank them all, in front of you, distinguished delegates, for their trust, dedication and commitment.

This year we will complete the implementation process introducing some further adjustments and fine-tuning. We shall focus particularly on learning and skills development, to be ready to take up the challenges and opportunities that 2011 – the ten year anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers - will offer us



Funding

The global financial crisis has also impacted the funding base of UNV, and we observed a decrease in total biennial donor funding (all sources), from \$41.8 million in 2006-2007, to \$34.7 million for 2008-2009. The Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) decreased from \$12.3 million, to \$10.4 million for the biennium. Despite this, we maintained the overall performance of the organization in number of UNV volunteers and experienced growth in online volunteering. For the coming years, donor contributions will continue to be critical for UNV to promote volunteerism programming and to support continued advocacy, especially in 2011. I would like to thank all of our donors who have contributed generously to our Special Voluntary Fund (a key source for innovating and piloting new volunteerism approaches, the UNV full-funding scheme or otherwise). We have also reached out to non-traditional donors and middle income countries and we thank them too for the support to the programme. We have also developed new partnerships with the private sector, which we hope will start to bear fruit soon.

CONCLUSION

In looking forward not only to 2011, but to the next five years, I see many opportunities for growth and for deepening the impact of UNV. UNDP's latest publication on the MDGs shows that the MDGs are achievable. If the international community is serious about achieving the MDGs, and I believe it is, as you have also indicated during this Board meeting, many additional resources are necessary. The MDG summit later this year will draw attention to the progress made, but also to the challenges ahead. I hope it will also recognize the power of volunteerism and the contributions that committed individuals all over the world can bring, complementing government action to the attainment of the targets.

We see the power of these contributions in the work of our national and international UNV volunteers, our online volunteers and the volunteers we mobilize locally through our programmes, projects, and advocacy activities.

We are pleased to partner with governments in creating opportunities for individuals to participate, to get engaged, through national volunteer schemes, by opening up volunteer centres, and working with communities. Volunteerism in this sense is a cost-effective approach to development: volunteers do **more for less**, and they are able to do so because they are motivated by values of solidarity. However, volunteerism does not come for free. We need to invest in the necessary structures and institutions to promote volunteerism, enact legislation, set up volunteer centres, professionalize volunteer management, as well as facilitating the sharing of knowledge and experiences



I would like to conclude by acknowledging all volunteers, including the UNV volunteers for their dedication. 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 to continue to strengthen the reach and impact of the UNV programme.

Thank you for your attention.