



## **International Volunteer Day 2011**

### **Statement by UNV Executive Coordinator, Flavia Pansieri**

5 December

Volunteers are an incredibly valuable asset.

During 2011, I have met countless dedicated people from all kinds of organizations achieving remarkable results for peace and development. Motivated by a passion for doing good, they advance peace, equality and inclusion, ensure environmental protection and move development forward.

We must continue tapping into this incredible energy! From the community health volunteer whose medical know-how reaches the remotest of communities, to the rescue-trained volunteer who joins government efforts to bring relief when disaster strikes, to the online volunteer who shares valuable skills and knowledge through the Internet when travelling to the location is impossible, we see such dynamism throughout the world.

In these and many other cases, it is a sense of solidarity with others that motivates people to action. And ultimately, 2011 – the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers – has been about supporting those who light up our world through their commitment to peace, human development and sustainability.

We are not only celebrating remarkable individuals. Throughout 2011 we have sought the ideas, views and inputs of remarkable stakeholder organizations from across the spectrum. Their messages were clear: we need to document what volunteers do, find new ways to measure the impact volunteerism makes, and share this information with others so that they can build on great ideas.

Today, we launch the first *State of the World's Volunteerism Report*, which showcases the universal values of volunteerism that are key to moving the world towards a more sustainable future.

Volunteerism is an essential component of any strategy that recognizes that progress cannot be measured solely in terms of economic return. As the *State of the World's Volunteerism Report* explains, it's also about 'well-being'. Volunteering not only delivers peace and development results; it is uniquely able to impact on the inner lives of individuals, communities and societies, binding them with bonds of trust and reciprocity.

Volunteerism provides opportunities for all people to be active agents of positive change. Volunteers promote cooperation and contribute to the well-being of individuals and of society as a whole. Active participation empowers people from the grassroots up, especially when supported by strong partnerships at every level.

So let's sustain the bonds we built this year to show how much volunteering matters to our planet – and to all mankind. Because by volunteering together, we can change the world.

#### **United Nations Volunteers**

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