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UNV Deputy Executive Coordinator Toily Kurbanov addresses the International Volunteer Forum in Sochi, Russian Federation.

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Celebrating volunteering in the Russian Federation

On 5 December, 2019, Toily Kurbanov, Deputy Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, took part in celebrations of International Volunteer Day in Sochi, Russia. He engaged with youth through the Day of Unified Action and participated in the International Volunteer Forum, the largest volunteer event in the country.

The Deputy Executive Coordinator (DEC) started IVD by volunteering at a local school in Sochi, leading a Lesson of Kindness. During the lesson, the DEC shared with 75 children and teenagers his thoughts on the importance of volunteering in Russia and globally, his family traditions of volunteering and his personal experience with the development of volunteerism internationally.

The Lesson of Kindness was part of the "Day of Unified Action" – a volunteer event across Russia for children in grades 4-11. Many notable speakers, including high-ranking officials, leaders, sportspersons, celebrities and activists, engaged with youth.

The Deputy Executive Coordinator spoke at the closing ceremony of the International Volunteer Forum, where he presented the nominees for

the People's Choice Award of the annual Volunteer of Russia contest. The International Volunteer Forum is the largest volunteer event in Russia, with 7,000 participants from 120 countries.

This year, the forum focused on partnership for common goals: building relationships between volunteers, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, government and the media. The Forum included various discussions and workshops with leading experts in volunteering and social programmes from all over the world, as well as international cooperation sessions and an exhibition of public associations and social initiatives.

“ Every year, the number of Russians among UN Volunteers is growing, supporting UNV's work in Asia and Africa, the Middle East and Eurasia. Today, the Russian volunteering effort is advancing among international volunteer movements. --Toily Kurbanov, Deputy Executive Coordinator, UNV

International Volunteer Day is an opportunity for volunteers and organizations to celebrate their efforts and share their work among their communities, non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies, government authorities and the private sector. Since 2017, it also corresponds with National Volunteer Day in Russia. The day focuses on the values of volunteerism through the appreciation of the efforts of local and international volunteers.

In 2018, the Year of Volunteerism in Russia, UNV and the Russian Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding, officially launching an initiative to bolster the participation of Russian nationals in United Nations activities. As fully-funded international UN Volunteers 19 Russian UN Volunteers and UN Youth Volunteers have served with United Nations agencies across the world through this partnership.

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