

International Year of Volunteers 10th Anniversary

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In November 1997, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers (IYV). The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme was designated as the international focal point.

The idea for IYV emerged from deliberations among several major international NGOs in the early 1990s. The formal proposal to proclaim 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers was made by the Japanese government, cosponsored by 123 countries, and was approved by the UN General Assembly.

The premise underlying IYV 2001 was that voluntary service makes an essential contribution in addressing social, economic, cultural, humanitarian and peacebuilding issues. For this to happen more effectively, there was a need for greater recognition and facilitation of volunteer work, networks to facilitate a drawing upon the best practices of volunteers, and more vigorous promotion of voluntary service.

2011 marked 10 years since the International Year of Volunteers, and the United Nations called for this anniversary to be marked across the planet.

On International Volunteer Day 2009, a Global Call for Action was made to invite all stakeholders to join the global effort to mark IYV+10. In so doing, they were encouraged to:

- Bring the voices of volunteers to the attention of policy decision-makers;
- Showcase volunteers in action including informal volunteering by people living in difficult circumstances, and self-support actions at the community level;
- Support the reactivation of National Committees for IYV+10;
- Encourage local and regional consultations and support improved tools for networking;
- Support the European Year of Volunteering 2011 (and similar in other regions);

- Bring the voices of volunteers to the international stage during the UN's General Assembly session in 2010 and 2011 – plus during the Commission on Social
 - Development meeting in the UN Secretariat;
 - Include the marking of IYV+10 in activities and/or events already planned to take place in 2011;
 - Advocate for a General Assembly resolution with strong recognition of the value of volunteerism to society with recommendation to governments for institutional support, and with call on governments and society to support and fund volunteer initiatives.
 - Immediately engage in participatory dialogue and to formulate Plans of Action to mark IYV+10.
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