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UNV Executive Coordinator Toily Kurbanov
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Remarks by Mr Toily Kurbanov, Executive Coordinator, presenting the UN Secretary-General's Report **A/76/137**

Mr Toily Kurbanov, Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, addressed the Third Committee of the General Assembly in a virtual session on 6 October 2021. He presented the UN Secretary-General's Report on Volunteering for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/76/137) under Agenda item 28, Social Development. Below are his remarks as delivered.

Mme/Mr Chairman,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

It is my honor to address you today. In my capacity as the Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV), I present the triennial report A/76/137 on “Volunteering for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

UNV was established by the General Assembly in 1971 and is administered by the United Nations Development Programme. This year marks the 50th anniversary of UNV.

The report by the Secretary-General is submitted in response to the request by the General Assembly in its resolution 73/140.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Following the Secretary-General's previous triennial report in 2018, the new report highlights both consistent patterns and new trends in volunteering that reflect dramatic changes in the world.

As in 2018, the Secretary-General notes the role of volunteers in reaching out to, and empowering, those left furthest behind. This is the most critical contribution of volunteering for the Agenda 2030.

Similar to previous findings, this report calls for a shift from ad-hoc volunteer projects to systematic integration of volunteering in development. This will help sustainability and scaled results.

And, consistent with earlier recommendations, the Secretary-General recognizes the importance of enabling environment for volunteer action and ensuring safety and security of volunteers.

Distinguished delegates,

The report notes some key changes since 2018 and commends Member States for the progress in enabling the volunteer action.

If the 2018 report stressed the need to recognize volunteers' role in the Agenda 2030, this report notes that 61 per cent of voluntary national reviews acknowledge volunteers' contributions across all SDGs.

Where in 2018 the Secretary-General called for the need to improve the evidence base, this year he commends the Member States that measured the scale and scope of volunteering.

If previous recommendation was to hold global technical meeting on volunteering, this report sums up the results of this meeting, held in 2020 and enabled by national and regional consultations.

Finally, whereas the 2018 report reflected the pre-Covid world, in 2021 the Secretary-General acknowledged the crucial role that volunteers played and continue to play in the pandemic response.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Secretary-General's report is a contribution to forward-looking strategic narrative on volunteering for development. In this context, allow me to highlight a few of its findings.

First, in national policies, Member States are often linking volunteering with youth engagement and, to a lesser extent, disaster preparedness. The report suggests the need to integrate volunteering into wider sustainable development strategies.

Second, Member States can build from the current focus on youth engagement to promote life-cycle approach to volunteering. This will help to mobilize everyone, everywhere, to meet the ambitions of the decade of action, especially at grassroots level.

Third, although volunteers are recognized in voluntary national reviews, many of these rely on anecdotal evidence. The report brings forward concrete suggestions on how to strengthen national data on the economic and social contributions of volunteering.

Fourth, different volunteer practices shape participation differently. Online volunteering, for example, facilitates access to some people, but can also exclude others. Member States would benefit from sharing experiences on how to address barriers to volunteering.

Fifth, the trust generated through volunteering can help societies to work on shared goals and thus to counter polarization. Multi-community, intergenerational volunteering, among others, can help capitalize on solidarity generated during the pandemic.

And sixth, Member States and UN country teams can deepen their engagement with volunteers in pursuit of the SDGs. To this end, the distinct contributions of volunteering can be integrated in Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

Mme/Mr Chair,

Ladies and gentlemen,

UNV is committed to supporting the integration of volunteerism into the 2030 Agenda. To foster the exchange of good practices, we encourage Member States to share your efforts and evidence on the [Knowledge Portal for Volunteerism](#) hosted by UNV.

In the same vein, UNV is finalizing the 2022 State of the World's Volunteerism Report. The report will present new evidence of how emerging models of volunteering can help build equal and inclusive societies, in the context of the 21st century.

Thank you.



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