As 2021 draws to a close, here are some of UNV's highlights

As the year 2021 draws to a close, we reflect on the highlights of our achievements. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the climate emergency, working in countries in crises and so much more, this year has been special for UNV, with our outstanding partnerships and significant milestones.
With sincere thanks for the continued support of our partners, we reflect on partnership highlights with four of our UN partners – the World Health Organization (WHO), UN Women, UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) and UN Development Programme (UNDP).

- **Africa Women Health Champions**

  The [WHO Women Health Champions initiative](#) recruited early to middle career women professionals to promote health and boost gender equity across 47 countries in Africa. Explore how the Women Health Champions Initiative empowered 100 female UN Volunteers to serve the UN system in [this video clip](#).

- **UN Women Young Women Leaders**

  Another important partnership this year was with UN Women. Together, UNV and UN Women recently launched the [Young Women Leaders Initiative](#) to create professional opportunities for the leaders of tomorrow – young, talented and dedicated women from the Global South – to contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment.

- **UNAMI Iraq Elections Support**
In October 2021, when Iraq's latest parliamentary election was successfully concluded, UN Volunteers bolstered the timely electoral preparations of the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC). As part of UNAMI, they increased awareness of and participation in credible parliamentary elections. Read more in this article.

- **UNDP Tandem Teams Initiative**

The UNDP-UNV Tandem Teams initiative bridges international experts and national UN Volunteers. In this video and article, discover how the initiative enables knowledge transfer, builds capacity, facilitates collaboration and creates volunteer opportunities for national experts in conflict settings where these opportunities may be scarce.

We express our deepest appreciation to our long-standing funding partners, including governments and other partners, for their contributions. Here is a selection of key initiatives that would not have been possible without these partners.

- **Advancing the inclusion of professionals with disabilities**
UNV continues to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the UN system as UN Volunteers, with generous contributions from Germany and Sweden. The UNDP-UNV Talent Programme for Young Professionals with Disabilities, which was launched in January 2018, is just one example of how we partner to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workforce of the United Nations.

- **SVF funded COVID-19 national volunteers**

UNV committed US $2 million from its Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) to mobilize national UN Volunteers in response to health emergencies. This enabled 140 UN Volunteers to serve with 18 United Nations entities in 79 countries in 2020 and 2021. Find out more about this initiative in Annual Report 2020, and read the experiences of UN Volunteers, for examples in the Philippines and Belarus.

- **Digital transformation**

With the support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), UNV has undertaken a digital transformation. This has included introducing robotic process automation, incorporating learning gamification, and culminated with the launch of a new Unified Volunteering Platform. This is a major digital leap to increase productivity, achieve client satisfaction and streamline work processes. Read more about the simultaneous launch of the Unified Volunteering Platform and Unified Conditions of Service in October 2021.

- **Digital Giving**

In 2021, in collaboration with UNDP’s Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy (BERA), we launched UNV’s first-ever Digital Giving platform. As part of the Digital Transformation project, the initiative aimed to diversify our donor base for the SVF and experiment with new ways to mobilize funding for UNV’s work and needs.
UNV not only has the mandate to mobilize volunteers for the UN system, but also has a pivotal role in advocating for the integration of volunteerism in peace and development endeavours worldwide.

- **Report of the Secretary-General: Volunteering for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

  The Report of the Secretary-General updates on the Plan of Action to Integrate Volunteering into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also identifies the need for further efforts to incorporate volunteering into national development strategies, plans and policies. Read the report to find out more about plans to expand and mobilize constituencies and engage people in national planning and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

- **State of the World’s Volunteerism Report**

  UNV recently launched the 2022 State of the World’s Volunteerism Report, bearing the title Building Equal and Inclusive Societies. This is the fourth in the series of triennial publications that informs about, advocates for and presents evidence on the role of volunteerism for peace and development. Find more about how volunteers and state
authorities interact and collaborate and why this is important in achieving the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals.

- **Growing recognition of volunteerism worldwide**

So, what is the state of world volunteerism now? Currently, some 114 countries have laws, schemes and policies on volunteering; 98 countries have measured volunteering at least once since 2007; and 112 countries have reported on the positive contribution of volunteering in their Voluntary National Review. All these numbers show growing recognition of volunteerism around the globe. Check out [UNV’s Knowledge Portal](#) for more data and resources.

- **Volunteer Work Measurement Guide**

Although people talk about the importance of volunteer work, little attention has been accorded to measuring and analyzing the actual numbers and statistics of volunteer work. To unlock the full potential of volunteer work, the International Labour Organization's Department of Statistics and International Training Centre (ITCilo), offered the first online course design to guide countries in [generating systematic and comparable data on volunteer work](#).
At this point, let us celebrate the exciting and historic milestones of UNV from 2021!

- **UNV turns 50**

This year, UNV marked the 50th anniversary since its founding in 1971. Take a moment to delve into our legacy where you can find a short history of UNV, our **UNV at 50 photo book**, and a **series of blogs** from former UNV executives and volunteers, as well as UNV partners and advocates.

- **General Assembly: an informal commemorative meeting**

An informal commemorative meeting of the **General Assembly** was held on Thursday, 2 December 2021, to celebrate UNV at 50 and the SWVR 2022. The commemoration recognized the spirit of volunteerism and its ability to help create a better future. This also aligned with **International Volunteer Day**, which was marked this year with the call to action: “Volunteer Now for our Common Future.”

- **Reaching more than 10,000 volunteers in one year**

For the first time in its 50-year history, UNV reached the milestone of 10,000 UN Volunteers
deployed in a single year. We feature the story of our UN Volunteer number 10,000, who serves with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in Pakistan. In celebrating this notable achievement, UNV hosted a live chat with the volunteer and released this video. Thank you, 10,000 times, to all who supported UNV to reach this outcome!

• Launch of the Unified Volunteering Platform

The AI-powered, cloud based Unified Volunteering Platform, launched in October 2021, fundamentally transforms the way UNV’s partners communicate and connect. Part of UNV’s digital transformation, it was been designed to facilitate all elements of UN Volunteer and Online Volunteer mobilization, recruitment and management.

All these accomplishments and more would not have been possible without the unrelenting dedication of our volunteers, staff and partners. They shared their expertise and know-how in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, brought different voices and energies together and converted this into collective action. Thank you to UNV’s long-standing partners, UNV’s personnel, and most importantly, the UN’s Volunteers for being true inspiration in action.

• UNV50 • Volunteerism • State of the World’s Volunteerism Report • Africa Women Health Champions • Unified Volunteering Platform • Unified Conditions of Service • Tandem Teams • International Volunteer Day • COVID-19

Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals