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The State of the World's Volunteerism Report was launched in Kenya on 30 March. Chief Administrative Secretary at the Ministry of Public Service, Hon. Dr Linah Jebii Kilimo (centre) launched the report. Ms Lucy Ndungu (second from left), Regional Manager, UNV East and Southern Africa Regional Office and Mr Walid Badawi (far right), UNDP Resident Representative were among the key speakers at the launch.

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State of the World's Volunteerism Report launched in Kenya, urges cooperation between volunteers and governments for inclusive growth

The fourth State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR), Building Equal and Inclusive Societies, has officially been launched in Kenya. The flagship Report of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme was launched on 30 March 2022 by the Chief Administrative Secretary in the Ministry of Public Service, Gender, Senior Citizens Affairs and Special Programmes, Hon. Dr. Linah Jebii Kilimo.

The report reveals that cooperation between volunteers and governments helps build collaborative decision-making. Despite the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic, global

interest in volunteering has not waned, and volunteering in communities has endured, notwithstanding limited mobility and resources. While restrictions have prevented many people from volunteering in person, many have switched to volunteering online.

Speaking on behalf of Hon. Prof. Margaret Kobia, Cabinet Secretary in the Ministry of Public Service, Gender Senior Citizens Affairs and Special Programmes, Hon. Kilimo noted that through volunteerism, more people participate in development at all levels of Kenyan society, empowering them to fully participate in addressing their development priorities.

“ As we rebuild better and stronger from the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government of Kenya will remain a champion for volunteerism and work with all stakeholders to integrate the key findings and policy recommendations of this Report into our development strategies and interventions towards equal and inclusive Kenyan society. --Hon. Dr. Linah Jebii Kilimo, Chief Administrative Secretary in the Ministry of Public Service, Gender, Senior Citizens Affairs and Special Programmes

The report draws on case study research in Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States and Latin America and the Caribbean, and concludes that the monthly number of volunteers aged 15 years and older amounts to over 850 million worldwide. The average monthly volunteer rate – defined as the share of working-age persons (15 years or older) who volunteer in a month – amounts to almost 15 per cent.

“ The goal of the publication is to strengthen understanding of volunteerism; demonstrate its universality, scope, and reach in the 21st century. --Ms Lucy Ndungu, Regional Manager of UNV's East and Southern Africa Regional Office

Speaking during the Launch of the report, Dr Stephen Jackson, UN Resident Coordinator in Kenya, noted that volunteerism provides an important opportunity for everyone, including marginalized groups, to have their voices heard and their actions recognized. "I laud the government of Kenya for strongly recognizing the role of volunteers and establishing a National Volunteerism Policy to help advance the ideals of volunteering in the country," he said.

“ The 2022 State of the World’s Volunteerism Report demonstrates that volunteers are important in helping us accelerate progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. --Mr Walid Badawi, UNDP Resident Representative in Kenya

This research comes at a crucial moment as countries start to build forward from the pandemic and institutions need to engage volunteers as key partners.

“ To build forward better, it will be very important for volunteers to be regarded as essential partners in development. --Ms Phoebe Mbithi, a volunteer with Voluntary Services Overseas, Kenya

The report identifies three models to highlight volunteer-state relationships – deliberative governance, co-production of services and social innovation – and offers policy recommendations. Decision makers are encouraged to:

- Promote volunteering beyond service delivery to include social innovation and inclusiveness;
- Strengthen public social recognition of volunteers especially as they are not financially rewarded;
- Create space where both volunteers and state authorities can share their experiences and establish common ground; and
- Invest in measurement and data on volunteers and support research on volunteerism.

As part of the SWVR preparation, UNV and Gallup conducted research to study the patterns of volunteerism during COVID-19. The multi-country primary data collection was conducted in March-April 2021, including a survey of eight thousand people in eight countries – Bolivia, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Senegal, Thailand, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

East and Southern Africa

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 10: Reduced inequalities](#) [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)