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Ms Kyoko Yokosuka, UNV Deputy Executive Coordinator, meets Mr Alisher Sadullaev, Director of the Youth Affairs Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Senator of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, during the launch of the SWVR 2022 at the Ninth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD).

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## Policymakers urged to build forward better together with volunteers

At the launch of the fourth State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR), policymakers were called upon to support volunteerism through concrete measures and enabling decisions. This launch brought together stakeholders in Europe and the CIS and Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, Thailand.

The event was held during the Ninth Asia-Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development, arranged by UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) in late March 2022. Dignitaries from UN entities, government officials, diplomatic corps, development partners and volunteers from Europe and the CIS and Asia and the Pacific attended the event live. More than 1,500 participants joined virtually.

Bearing the title: Building equal and inclusive societies, the [State of the World's Volunteerism Report 2022](#) presents new evidence on volunteer-state partnerships. It reveals that cooperation between volunteers and governments helps build collaborative decision-making.

“ This report is both timely and relevant as it explores the general theme of building equal and inclusive societies, focusing particularly on volunteerism and a new social contract. --Ms Kyoko Yokosuka, Deputy Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme

"As the world starts to build forward better from the pandemic, governments and other stakeholders need to work even more closely with volunteers, engaging with them as key partners and opening the space for them to collaborate on vital development solutions. In doing so, we can help create a 21st Century social contract that is more inclusive and responsive to the needs of communities," Ms Yokosuka added.

The report also advocates for building partnerships, especially with marginalized groups, as part of a 21st-century social contract that delivers the key promise of the 2030 Agenda and utilizes the potential of volunteers in helping to attain people-centred development.

“ Collaboration between governments and volunteers from vulnerable groups can provide a pathway for rights-based participation and help echo the voices of vulnerable groups in decision-making processes. -  
-Ms Eksiri Pintaruchi, Director-General, Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand

During the event in Bangkok, policymakers from Europe and the CIS and Asia and the Pacific exchanged their experiences in building, maintaining and developing partnerships between the state and volunteers. Sharing the experience of Bangladesh, H.E. Mr Muhammad Tazul Islam, Member of Parliament, Honorable Minister of Local Government, Rural Development

and Cooperatives, People's Republic of Bangladesh, highlighted: "Volunteerism is increasingly seen as an essential ingredient in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals." He added that "fostering volunteerism is very important in Bangladesh for increasing civic engagement and citizen participation, and for ensuring the attainment of SDGs and government long-term development goals, including Vision 2041 and the Delta Plan 2100."

Another honorable guest of the opening panel of the event, Mr Alisher Sadullaev, Director of the Youth Affairs Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Senator of Oliy Majilis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, explained how the research for the report was conducted.

"The launch of the SWVR gives us reason once again to take a proper look at volunteer action around the globe. To close the evidence gap, UNV and Gallup undertook a study on volunteerism during the COVID-19 pandemic in eight countries in the Global South: Bolivia, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Senegal, Thailand, Turkey and Uzbekistan. This indeed motivates us to support volunteerism on a grand scale."

"In modern Uzbekistan, with the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan, H.E. Mr Shavkat Mirziyoyev, we adopted a law on volunteering activities that serves to empower people, especially young people, to volunteer," Mr Sadullaev added.

In the report, readers will find in-depth case studies from countries of the Europe and Central Asia and Asia and Pacific regions, including Nepal, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, as well as data and special contributions from Bangladesh, Uzbekistan, India, Thailand, and Turkey. The report also includes cases studies from Africa, the Arab States, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States and Latin America and the Caribbean. Drawing on this qualitative and quantitative data, the report considers three partnership models between the state and volunteers that can contribute to substantive social change. These models are deliberative governance, co-production and delivery of services and social innovation.



Despite the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, global interest in volunteering has not waned, and volunteering in communities has endured despite limited mobility and resources. While restrictions have prevented many people from volunteering in person, many have switched to volunteering online.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has given a great impetus to the development of volunteerism and the key role of volunteers in our societies, because many people were and are now at risk of being left behind in education, employment, economic opportunities, health and wellbeing due to the pandemic impact," asserted Mr Sadullaev.

The launch session included an Interactive Knowledge Café, where participants had a chance to exchange trends and perspectives on volunteerism. Honorable guests included Mr Madiyar Kozhakhmet, Chairman of the Committee on Civil Society Affairs, the Ministry of Information and Social Development of Kazakhstan and Ms Lasata Joshi, Research Volunteer, Kathmandu University of Nepal. Both participants shared their vision of the future of volunteerism on governmental and volunteer organization level accordingly.

This future is explored in the report itself, which concludes that volunteerism is a fundamental part of building and strengthening people-state relationships. In turn, this leads to better collaboration and governance that

promotes better development outcomes and thus helps build equal and inclusive societies.

The report presents specific recommendations for key stakeholders such as policy and decision-makers on how to support volunteerism and volunteers in this significant role:

- 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 a space where both volunteers and state authorities can share their experiences and establish common ground.
- Invest in measurement and data on volunteers and support research on volunteerism.

The SWVR 2022 comes as the world is on a development trajectory that requires harnessing all sectors and resources towards attaining the SDGs so no one is left behind.

Globally, an estimated 862 million people volunteer every month. Asia and the Pacific (with over 563 million people volunteering) and Europe and Central Asia (with more than 81 million people volunteering) top other regions.

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## Global

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