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Virginie Zoubere, national UN volunteer, during an information session on employment, engagement and inclusion of people with disabilities on 5 February 2022 at the Graduate Institute of Security and Humanitarian Affairs

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Promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities is key for sustainable development

Celebrated on 3 December every year, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities recognizes the importance of inclusion in life and in the workplace. The disability inclusion strategy of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme aims to create a talent pool of qualified professionals living with disabilities, visible and invisible, who advance sustainable development at national and global levels. In West and Central Africa, Djimet Nangtour (Chad), Virginie Zoubere (Burkina Faso) and Atunwa Damilare (Nigeria) are national UN Volunteers with disabilities who contribute daily to the mandates of their UN host agencies.

Djimet Nangtour is a visually impaired national UN Volunteer deployed to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Chad. As

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a Legal Advisor and Human Rights Specialist, he is responsible for conducting analyses of national laws and regulations. The advice and guidance he provides to his host organization helps to identify abuses and/or violations of the human rights of individuals, including people with disabilities.

In addition, Djimet supported the implementation of an inclusive and peaceful institutional and political transition, in accordance with Axis 3 of the Chadian government's roadmap for "Strengthening Good Governance and the Rule of Law". The 38-year-old UN Volunteer carried out training workshops for civil society organizations on human rights monitoring during the transition period and during the elections.

Djimet organized two workshops to train investigators on verifying cases of illegal detentions and mapping cases of human rights violations throughout Chad. He took part in the monitoring of human rights violations, which are necessary to detect irregularities and inform partners so they can take action.

As a result of his contribution, today at least 100 civil society organizations are equipped with human rights monitoring equipment, and nearly 100 investigators are equipped to investigate cases of illegal detention and human rights violations.

In Burkina Faso, Virginie Zoubere is a national UN Volunteer Communications Assistant deployed with the UN Development Programme (UNDP). She is actively involved in developing the visibility of the UNDP country office on the web and social media.

An advocate for the inclusion of persons with disabilities, Virginie was diagnosed at the age of seven with femoral necrosis of the hip, which unfortunately reached a very advanced stage last year and required major surgery to replace the entire hip bone with a full prosthetic.

Nonetheless, Virginie continues to serve UNDP, where she builds the capacity of staff and youth in her community on the use of information and communication technologies to advocate for volunteerism and the inclusion of persons with disabilities. This includes producing and adapting content (editorial, visuals, photos, videos) for the institution's digital platforms, such as the UNV and UNDP newsletters. She also carries out activities and field missions to collect quality information, photos, and videos of success stories during events involving UNDP and volunteers are involved.

“ Since Virginie's arrival, the Communication Unit's response capacity has been strengthened in all areas, including digital communication by managing some of our social media accounts and supporting our colleagues in the Programme, Operations and Economics Unit in their communication needs. --
Mahamadi Ouedraogo, Communication Officer with UNDP in Burkina Faso

Virginie believes that UNDP provides great support to young people in the field of entrepreneurship, gender and inclusion of persons with disabilities. This is the positive feedback she receives from the communities and beneficiaries at community level. She feels honoured to be able to support the activities of her agency as a UN Volunteer in the communications team.

In Nigeria, Atunwa Damilare is a national UN Volunteer Data Management Assistant with UNDP. He helps reduce the risk of double payments to beneficiaries of cash transfer programmes, like the elderly, those with disabilities and small businesses.

In fact, Atunwa's main task comprises collecting and cleaning data from beneficiaries periodically to identify various errors, which are not limited to wrong account details or duplicates, so that all payments are made in time. This minimizes the waste of resources and allows more vulnerable groups in the community and small businesses to benefit from the ongoing cash transfer programme. He reports that beneficiaries are now being paid promptly and without any cancellation of payments.

This Nigerian UN Volunteer has introduced the use of MySQL, an open-source relational database management system and analysis tool that minimizes errors and makes work more efficient and faster to improve data management at UNDP Nigeria.

“ The UNV programme has greatly improved my confidence level and enhanced my ability to work in

“ a team. Although I have a physical disability, it does not prevent me from doing my job like everyone else. UNV has also sharpened my knowledge and skills as I continue to research ways to do my job effectively and efficiently. I have also met people from all walks of life and learned to respect the culture and diversity of people. --national UN Volunteer Atwuna Damilare, Data Management Assistant at UNDP Nigeria

In 2022, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme has deployed 38 people with disabilities to five UN agencies in West and Central Africa, including UNDP, OHCHR and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).

 West and Central Africa

• International Day of Persons with Disabilities • Persons with disabilities • inclusion

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