30 October 2020

UNV Executive Coordinator Mr Olivier Adam (left), at the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with Ms Anita Bhatia (centre, bottom row), Assistant Secretary General and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women. Also present (clockwise): Naoual Driouich, Chief of UN Systems Affairs at UNV, Irena Sabados, Human Resources Specialist at UN Women, Prasun Chakraborty, Head a.i. Division for Human Resources at UN Women, and Lauren Phillips, Partnerships Specialist at UNV.

UNV and UN Women sign Memorandum of Understanding to propel global partnership to new heights

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UN Women today. The agreement establishes a framework for the two partners to strengthen collaboration in advancing gender equity and engaging women in sustainable development and peace through volunteerism.

This Memorandum of Understanding marks a significant milestone for the partnership between the two organizations, as it sets the legal and operational framework for future collaboration. UNV will continue to support UN Women in achieving its strategic priorities through the deployment of volunteer talent and by utilizing volunteerism. This will enable UN Women to build local capacities, engage with grassroots communities and civil society, and involve women and youth in its development interventions.
UNV is an active proponent of women’s empowerment, and in 2020 attained gender parity among all UN Volunteers. We have long enjoyed a close and rapidly growing partnership with UN Women, which we deeply value and look forward to propelling to new heights.

--Mr Olivier Adam, UNV Executive Coordinator

In 2019, UN Women hosted 273 UN Volunteers, a 49 per cent increase over 2018. Their contributions include supporting resilience and empowerment centres for female refugees in Jordan, building a case for ending female genital mutilation, child marriage and other harmful practices and mainstreaming gender in peace, security and humanitarian responses in Africa.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic this year, UN Volunteers with UN Women have been supporting in assessing and addressing the gender impact of COVID-19 in Thailand and Morocco, preventing and responding to the spike in gender-based violence cases in Peru, supporting indigenous communities with the COVID-19 response in Guatemala and contributing to IT skills development of girls and women in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The UN Volunteers who work with UN Women bring invaluable skill, energy and commitment everywhere they go. We are delighted to be formalizing a relationship that has already clearly shown such synergy. UN Volunteers have the kind of diversity of knowledge and background that is vital to success. --Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women

The growing partnership between UNV and UN Women recognizes the links between volunteerism and gender equality, noting that women make up 60 per cent of all volunteers around the world. Volunteering offers particular benefits for women, including fostering social connections, engagement in local decision-making and helping them overcome vulnerabilities.

UN Women was also actively engaged in the recent Global Technical Meeting on Reimagining Volunteering for the 2030 Agenda, convened by UNV and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies this year. In the context of leaving no one behind, the organization contributed a section on valuing and equalizing volunteering for all to the Global Synthesis Report of the Plan of Action to integrate volunteering in the 2030 Agenda.
To support implementation of their new partnership agreement, UN Women and UNV have committed to a joint global action plan, which foresees expanding the deployment of both on-site UN Volunteers and Online Volunteers with UN Women, at country and regional level, in support of the 2030 Agenda.

- gender empowerment • gender equality • gender mainstreaming

Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 5: Gender equality, SDG 10: Reduced inequalities, SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals