UN Volunteers arrive in Sochi to participate at the XIX World Festival of Youth and Students. (UNV, 2017)

In support of Youth Volunteerism: UN Volunteers from 32 countries participate in the World Festival of Youth and Students

Thirty-six UN Volunteers from thirty-two countries are participating in the XIX World Festival of Youth and Students (WFYS) in Sochi, slated to be one of the largest events in the field of international youth cooperation in the Russian Federation. UN Volunteers are providing organizational support to the festival, engaging in inspirational talks, and through their engagement proactively underpinning youth inclusion for sustainable development.

The festival brings together more than 20,000 young people from 150 countries. Partnering with the World Festival of Youth and Students (WFYS) for the very first time, United Nations Volunteers is supporting the Volunteer Corps of the festival, that includes almost 7,000 volunteers.
Seen as a new milestone in international cooperation, the festival unites the current generations around the ideas of peace and friendship. Historically, the festival is an international event sponsored by the World Federation of Democratic Youth, a UN recognized non-governmental organization, and has been held regularly since 1947. Prague, Budapest, Havana, Pretoria, Quito, Pyongyang were some of festival’s previous venues. The festival is a platform for dialogue and addresses the challenges facing youth today through discourse, cultural programmes, sports and networking.

The deployment of 36 UN Volunteers at the 2017 edition provides UNV with the unique opportunity to take part in a large-scale initiative unlike any other in support of volunteerism. Through this, UNV hopes to create an international network of peers and colleagues, and contribute its expertise and know-how to the festival. Through their participation, the UN Volunteers will gain valuable skills, knowledge and insights.

There is a multitude of events planned for the event. UNV participates in the educational segment of the festival with delegates from the headquarters in Bonn in many high-level panel discussions including one on civil society.

Mr. Toily Kurbanov, UNV Deputy Executive Coordinator underlines the importance for UNV’s participation:
Russia is now of great interest from the point of view of studying its positive experience in organizing the volunteer system and the work of volunteer centres both in interaction with each other, with volunteers, and in partnership with government authorities.

One of the most sought after speaking engagements is a Talk with UN Volunteers where selected UN Volunteers have been media-trained to talk on clusters based around climate action, youth inclusion and equality.

In addition, UN Volunteers will manage and speak at the custom-designed UNV booth in the festival exhibition area. Festival goers and participants from all corners of the world will get an opportunity to interact with UN Volunteers, hear their stories up close and personal, visit the photo exhibition featuring the work of the United Nations and see UNV documentary films showcased at the booth.

Mr. Kurbanov adds:

"UNV brings frontline insight and experience to the festival – we are excited to share the stories, and compare experiences about the role of volunteerism in different countries."
Sharing experiences of international volunteering while underpinning youth inclusion and youth development as a significant building block to sustainable development, UNV in Sochi is tapping the unprecedented outreach potential of this event and creating visibility for the programme.

https://www.unv.org/world-festival-youth-and-students-un-volunteers-recall-their-experiences

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