Overwhelming support for UNV at Executive Board annual meeting 2016

UNV Executive Coordinator Richard Dictus presented a detailed report to the Executive Board on UNV’s key results and mid-term review reflections, in addition to calling for revitalizing partnerships on volunteerism for the SDGs.

“Quite simply put – the UN could not deploy, and Security Council mandates could not be delivered, without UNV.” These were the comments of Assistant Secretary-General Hubert Price of the UN Department of Field Support, speaking on behalf of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs. Speaking at the annual session of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Office for Project Services.
This formal interaction of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme with its Executive Board occurs once every two years. The session at the Board was introduced by the UNDP Associate Administrator, Mr. Tegegnework Gettu, who emphasized the value that UNV brings to UNDP operations. He expressed how she was thoroughly impressed by those who volunteer their time and expertise as UN Volunteers, and thanked the 6,400 UN Volunteers and 11,800 UN Online Volunteers annually carrying out assignments for peace and development, and often serving in challenging and remote locations.

UNV Executive Coordinator Richard Dictus presented a detailed report on UNV’s key results and mid-term review reflections, in addition to calling for revitalizing partnerships on volunteerism for the SDGs. Mr Dictus also launched the UNV Annual Report 2015, Delivering at the Grassroots. Mr Dictus also “reaffirmed UNV’s position as a partner and innovation orientated organisation, and invited all Board members and partners to participate in the shaping of UNV for the final two years of the current Strategic Framework, and looking ahead to 2018-2021.”

UNV received positive support from UN Member States, specifically from the Permanent Missions of: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Germany, Guinea, Haiti, Japan, Korea, Nepal, Russia, Sweden and Switzerland (kindly read the statements online here).

Germany congratulated UNV for its successful shift to become a more strategic and partner-focused organization, with robust result orientation, strengthened internal government and a reshaped strategic thinking. She expressed admiration for the straightforwardness and frankness of the EB report as expression of the new spirit and noted with appreciated that nearly two thirds of the indicators were meet or exceeded performance. The delegate showed strong appreciation for UNV’s revitalized engagement with the UN programming process leading to 50 projects worth US $90 million in commitments from partners and further praised its role in South-South cooperation. She also noted the renewed UNV commitment to gender equality, with the percentage of UNV/UN partner programmes integrating gender equality and the empowerment of women increasing from 44 to 88 per cent.

The representative of Germany emphasized that the qualitative growth of UNV is more important in the long run than reaching 10,000 volunteers mobilized annually. She
encouraged UNV to keep a healthy balance between its activities of volunteer mobilization and management, advocacy work, country led-volunteer schemes and to step up its support for national, regional and sub-national volunteer schemes. In the end, she mentioned Germany’s long-standing cooperation and excellent relationship with UNV being proud of hosting UNV headquarters in Bonn. The delegate further noted that Germany is the main bilateral donor of UNV (US$ 5.7 million in 2014) and is providing annually €1.7 million for the Special Voluntary Fund and non-core funds in areas such as Online Volunteering and results-based management, gender-responsive peacebuilding and the support of the peace process in Mali.

Japan saluted UNV for strengthening its partnerships over the past two years and highlighted the strategic dialogues held between UNV and Japan. Furthermore, the delegation underlined that it is a major donor to UNV with contributions through the Japan Trust Fund and Human Resources Development programme (HRD) to which Japan attached great value. Between 2007 and 2015, a total of 146 UNV HRD volunteers completed UNV assignments and provided support to more than 16 UN agencies and partner organizations in 44 countries. Japan welcomed the UNV mid-term review of the Strategic Framework 2014-2017 and appreciated UNV’s performance, in which nearly 2/3 of indicators were met or exceeded performance. The representative noted that UNV has delivered a significant, positive base of programme results at mid-term. Looking ahead, Japan is looking forward to the continued transformation of UNV as it develops the next Strategic Framework 2018-2021 and reiterates its commitment and support for UNV.

The delegation of Sweden expressed gratitude for UNV’s excellent report and noted that UNV is a relatively unnoticed entity within the UN system, one that conducts its important work with little attention. Sweden appreciates UNV as a partner for dialogue and co-creation of new and innovative working methods of development cooperation as well as engaging new actors like the private sector. The representative also underlined UNV’s strength in South-South cooperation as a success story (83% of field and 58% of online volunteers are from the South).

The delegate of Switzerland noted with appreciation UNV’s outcome and output performance and pointed to areas where UNV needs to accelerate progress and encouraged UNV to increase its efforts to advocate for innovative, needs-driven, programmatic agreements with other UN entities to mobilize volunteers. Furthermore, UNV needs to increase its support to countries through national or regional volunteering schemes as enhanced efforts in these fields will play a critical role for UNV as common service provider to the UN system and will help to promote volunteerism to achieve the
The representative of Guinea emphasized that the positive impact of volunteer action at the local level means that volunteers and volunteerism have pride of place in the work of UN entities. While noting the role of volunteerism for society in general, the delegate pointed out that volunteerism played a decisive role in responding to the Ebola virus, including awareness raising, capacities for prevention services and volunteer mobilization to provide food to affected communities and psycho-socio-care for orphans. Guinea is grateful for the support of UNV responding to Ebola and post-recover and is ready to strengthen its partnership with UNV to scale up volunteer capacities.

The delegate of Nepal recounted how the first UN Volunteer arrived in Nepal in 1974. Since then, UNV has been part of capacity building, mobilization of local people in development activities, local governance and community development programmes, as well as helped strengthening the national development services. After the massive earthquake in 2014, Nepalese volunteers were among the first responders. UNV was also part of the response and early recovery as part of UNDP’s project on affected infrastructure. Facing challenges in relation to poverty eradication, the promotion of sustainable development and its integration into national development plan as well as reconstruction challenges after the earthquake, Nepal was thankful, he said, for UNV’s continued support.

The representative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Ms. Anne Christensen, noted the strong mutual collaboration with UNV, especially in the areas of promotion of volunteerism through global networks, knowledge and policy research, efforts to enhance the security of volunteers, and highlighting the critical role of volunteers as first responders in crisis. She quoted the Secretary General of the IFRC, who, at the World Humanitarian Summit, had stated, “volunteers are working within local communities to support care, help, heal and build social capital in order to find common solution to humanitarian challenges”. The representative further emphasized that the IFRS looks forward to working with UNV to build the "one billion coalition of volunteers for resilience".

The annual session 2016 of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS was a marked success for UNV. The Report of the Administrator was well received by the Executive Board, which passed a decision that, inter alia, commends UNV for the midterm results and achievements of its Strategic Framework, 2014-2017. This decision further
requests that UNV build on the progress made in pursuing forward-looking and innovative approaches and partnerships to developing volunteer solutions for sustainable development challenges in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including collaboration with partners such as academia, civil society, the private sector and others.

If you want to know more, you can read the complete UNV Report of the Administrator in English (in other languages).

Or take a look at:

- UNV statistical Overview
- UNV financial Overview
- UNV integrated results and resources matrix 2015 results
- The Midterm review compendium of adjustments to the integrated results and resources matrix
- UNV integrated results and resources matrix
- UNV discussion paper - Volunteering as essential in achieving sustainable development: UNV responding to the 2030

You can also read UNV Executive Coordinator statement, Mr Richard Dictus, and the statement by UNDP Associate Administrator.
• Executive Board • statistics • finance

Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals