A call for action on volunteerism in Kenya

The "CEO's roundtable on national volunteerism", which was held on 22 October 2015 in Kenya, was a milestone for the national volunteer community in the country, as it concluded with a call for the speedy adoption of the National Volunteer Policy and an appeal to put in place a framework for promoting volunteerism in the country. The National Volunteer Policy has been developed with significant support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, and can also help raise the profile of volunteers in the country.

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The Roundtable has been established as a consultative platform for supporting volunteerism in Kenya. This year’s event was organized by the Volunteer Involving Organizations (VIO) Society with support from the Kenya Government, UNDP, UNV, Kenya Red Cross and other partners. The UNV Field Unit in Kenya has been actively involved in the efforts to build capacity for the VIO Society, which is a legitimate umbrella network for mobilizing volunteer organizations in Kenya.

Tapiwa Kamuruko, the UNV Regional Manager for Africa, while representing the Resident Coordinator, reminded the participants of the critical role of volunteers in realizing the recently launched global Sustainable Development Goals. He thus asked for the adoption of the National Volunteer Policy and highlighted the need for developing a strong national volunteer infrastructure to secure proper implementation of this policy.

While making the final remarks, the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services, Mr. Ali Noor Ismael, reiterated the commitment of the Ministry to hasten the adoption of the National Volunteerism Policy. He also highlighted the establishment of the National Volunteer Secretariat through the support of UNDP. The secretariat could help implement a policy on national volunteerism.

The Roundtable was well attended by, among others, the Governor of Uasin Gishu county, H.E Jackson Mandago, the Governor of Makueni county, H.E. Prof Kivutha Kibwana, and the Governor of Elgeyo Marakwet county, H.E. Alex Tolgos. The Kenya Red Cross Secretary General, Dr. Abbas Gullet, was the event host.

Some of the participants agreed to work with the Government in developing training curricula on volunteerism.

The participants further committed to make the CEOs’ roundtable an annual event to strengthen and audit the progress of the volunteer support activities undertaken during the year.

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