



**UN  
VOLUNTEERS**

**REMARKS BY**

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**ON THE OCCASION OF**

**UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board**

**New York, 9 June 2016**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Thank you Associate Administrator for your introduction of the Administrator's Report [on UNV for the 2014-2015 biennium] -- we are grateful for the commitment and support provided by you, the Administrator and UNDP.

Madam President,  
Excellencies and Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,  
Associate Administrator,  
Colleagues:

I start my short remarks with an example of the role and contribution of volunteers and volunteerism to peace and development. In December last year I visited South Sudan to meet with the Government, partners and the 530 UN Volunteers serving there. South Sudan represents a unique combination of UN Volunteers supporting UN peacekeeping as well as UN agency development programmes. I was accompanied by representatives of Korea, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UN country team to visit the Juba Teaching Hospital. There I met with four UN Volunteer Midwives serving with UNFPA who were saving the lives of women and children by providing a well-run maternity ward. The facilities, upgraded by UNFPA with support from the Governments of Japan and Canada, have also enabled a new crop of 100 skills birth attendants to be trained by those UN Volunteers in the last three years. We met with the current group, 26 health workers on reproductive health, including six traditional birth attendants.

With over 18,000 on-site and online volunteers every year, UNV is facilitating the engagement of men, women and young people to serve and support the efforts of the United Nations and Members States in peace-keeping, humanitarian response and development programming. As part of a global coalition of volunteer involving organizations, UNV is reaching out to individuals, communities and diverse actors in order to contribute to 'leaving no one behind' over the next decade and beyond.

Madam President,

Today, in addition to the Administrator's report before you, I also have the pleasure to launch the UNV Annual Report for 2015 which provides further insights into the results of the organisation [– on the tables in front on you]. With these reports, I am bringing three main strategic issues to the attention of the Executive Board;

- First, to highlight the programmatic and institutional results that UNV has delivered in the first two years of our Strategic Framework;
- Second, outline the key reflections from the midterm review of our Strategic Framework;
- And third, reaffirm UNV's position as a partner and innovation orientated organisation, and invite 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.

Madam President,

In highlighting the programmatic and institutional results that UNV has delivered in the first two years of our Strategic Framework, some 2015 UNV facts and figures to provide a sense of size and scale, are:

- Nearly 6,800 qualified and committed UN Volunteers, from 153 nationalities serve in 122 countries. [Please refer to an extract from the 2015 Annual Report, also in front of you, to see your countries contributions – noting that 2,300 of the 6,800 volunteers are from the 36 Board members.]
- UN Volunteers served with nearly 30 UN partners, with the top five being DPKO/DPA, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF and UNFPA.
- 11,800 UN Online Volunteers contributed to 19,000 online assignments, serving 28 UN partners and 1,700 non-governmental organizations.
- 5.7 million beneficiaries positively impacted by our UN Volunteers in the field.

Through our Integrated Results and Resources Matrix, UNV delivered a step-change in how it systematically measures programme and institutional performance against midterm milestone targets. With nearly two thirds of the active indicators meeting or exceeding targets, UNV has delivered a significant, positive base of results at midterm – from which I will provide some key highlights.

Mobilization of UN Volunteers in support of the United Nations system's country-level activities was a key success for UNV during 2014-2015. For the first time since 2010, UNV increased the annual number of UN Volunteers mobilized, to nearly 6,800, with 83 per cent of these UN Volunteers from countries of the global South. We are incredibly proud of the 83% figure, especially as it matches so closely with global demographics; with 84% of the global population residing in the global South. UNV is a significant expression of South-South cooperation within the United Nations system.

Some 43 per cent of UN Volunteers are women. This is a three per cent increase over the last biennium – which coupled with the two per cent increased reported two years ago, demonstrates the consistent gradual positive progress UNV is making toward gender balance.

Only volunteers who feel supported and protected by their host organisation can be expected to deliver their professional inputs to the UN System. UNV therefore takes great care to look after our UN Volunteers and in 2015, 92 per cent of all UN Volunteers reported a positive volunteer experience. We focused on improving their experience, and in the past two years delivered a UN Volunteer learning strategy, and launched revised conditions of service for international United Nations Volunteers. Following in-depth consultations with our UN partners and international volunteer involvement organisations, UNV's new practices can be seen as best in class.

The UNV Online Volunteer service continued to grow, with over 480,000 registered users from 180 countries. A 2014 evaluation of the service highlighted how UNV is expanding online volunteerism globally and broadening volunteer opportunities, particularly for people with disabilities, women and volunteers from developing countries. In 2014-2015, 2 per cent of UN Online Volunteers mobilized were people with disabilities; 59 per cent with female and 62 per cent were from countries of the global South. On 18 April 2016, UNV and SAMSUNG announced a corporate partnership on the UNV Online Volunteering service. This is the first of a series of corporate partnerships for UNV, as part of our goal to expand the global reach of Online Volunteering and explore innovative methods to ensure the broadest possible participation.

As envisaged in the Strategic Framework, UNV has developed a new pipeline of joint UN programmes and projects at country level, which has enabled us shape, with Governments and civil society, the role that volunteers and volunteerism play in tackling sustainable development challenges. To date, the first generation of new projects has been endorsed, with \$5 million from the UNV Special Voluntary Fund



invested in joint UN projects, strategically leveraging a total financial envelope of nearly \$90 million in commitments from partners -- an 18-fold multiplier effect.

In 2015, UNV produced a second 'State of the World's Volunteerism' report, this time delivering a unique focus on 'transforming governance'; a global review of the role of volunteerism in improving the way citizens are engaged and activated in national and subnational governance processes. The report was launched in New York, Nairobi, New Delhi, Bahrain, Tokyo and Panama City. It provides evidence from around the world on how formal and informal volunteers engage with governance actors to strengthen participation, accountability and responsiveness.

UNV support was instrumental for convening and facilitating the engagement of international and national volunteer-involving organizations in the post-2015 consultative process, including national dialogues and key United Nations consultations on the 2030 Agenda. At the global level, with the support of UNV, the Post-2015 Volunteering Group positioned volunteerism in the new development agenda.

UNV further deepened its South-South engagement by co-hosting in 2015 the International Volunteer Service Exchange Conference with the Beijing Volunteer Service Federation in China, with over 18 Member States participating. With this, a new platform was created for South-South knowledge-sharing and information exchange on volunteerism among middle-income countries. Specifically, the conference resulted in an agreement to deploy joint humanitarian response teams of volunteers from the South in the South.

In operational terms, UNV has become a more effective and efficient organization, with improved systems and business practices and processes, well-managed resources and engaged personnel. We operationalized our institutional effectiveness across seven pillars, within which indicator baselines and targets were established and delivered upon. There were four major areas of focus of change in UNV institutional effectiveness during 2014-2015:

- Strengthened results-based management;
- Enhanced partnerships and communications;
- Better UN Volunteer management;
- Improved human resources and operations.

The launch of the Strategic Framework, 2014-2017 represented the first step in an evolution in UNV strategic thinking, results and orientation. In order to implement and operationalize the Strategic Framework and Integrated Results and Resources Matrix, comprehensive sub-strategies and policies were developed, consulted upon and launched in 2014 and 2015. This included the UN volunteer mobilization and management strategy, five global programmes, the UN Volunteer learning strategy and more. Institutionally, this included strategies for: an integrated budget, human resources, communications, partnerships, information and communications technology and more. To round this off, UNV adopted a new corporate planning process similar to that of UNDP, culminating in organizational annual business plans for 2014 and 2015.

This more structured way of operating necessitated structural change that transformed UNV human resources in the organisation. UNV launched a new human resources strategy, transforming UNV from a headquarters-based to a global organization with enhanced presence at regional and country levels; at the end of 2015, UNV has 300 personnel, 58% of which was deployed at the regional and country level.

A major step was the establishment of four regional offices – in Nairobi, Dakar, Panama City and Bangkok – to strengthen capacity at the regional level, provide UNV field units with business intelligence, programme advisory and partnership capacities and put our people closer to our partners. In addition, UNV is implementing an enhanced field presence plan which will consolidate and strengthen its field capacity, based upon needs and potential at country level. Finally, in operational terms, I am happy to report that UNV made great progress on gender balance of UNV personnel. 60 per cent of personnel are female, and female representation at senior management level (P5 and above) increased significantly to 54 per cent, up from 38 per cent in 2013.

As I speak of the human resources of the organisation, I would like to express profound thanks to all UNV personnel for their great care, commitment and engagement – they're a small team doing some great things for peace and development.

In terms of UNV financial performance, three midterm messages emerged / were affirmed:

- The significance of UN Volunteer mobilisation/management as the core function of UNV;
- The importance of the regular 'core' resources provided by Members States to UNV;
- The crucial role that the Special Voluntary Fund plays, providing seed funding for innovative projects.

To be clear – as core funding reduced, and UN Volunteer numbers have not picked up yet sufficiently, we have reduced operating costs, especially in headquarters, and have drawn from our reserves. UNV was willing to take on a small deficit, because we feel strongly in our investments for future dividends.

Madam President,

At the midterm of our Strategic Framework, overall, there are three reflections to highlight:

First, adjustment to Agenda 2030 is critical for UNV. More so as our UN partners will be adjusting, which will change the demand of our services. The SDGs call upon UNV's central mandate: to engage all available resources and foster the broad participation in pursuit of a shared development agenda. Mobilisation and civic engagement is at the very heart of volunteerism and as the planet is challenging itself to sustainably change, it is one of the ways to ensure as many people as possible are bound in – isn't that what 'unleashing the transformative capacities of people' is all about?

Implementing the plan of action on volunteerism approved by the General Assembly under GA/RES/70/129 is a major opportunity for leveraging these transformative capacities of people and building transformational partnerships to deliver solutions. Its three strategic objectives are to: (a) strengthen people's ownership of the development agenda through broadening civic engagement; (b) integrate volunteerism into national and global implementation strategies for the Sustainable Development Goals; and (c) measure the transformative impact of volunteerism. Strong commitment and partnerships among governments, academia, the United Nations system, civil society, volunteer-involving organizations and private sector are crucial for successful implementation of the plan.

In the resolution, the Assembly called upon Member States, United Nations agencies, the private sector and other stakeholders to support and resource the plan, with UNV coordinating its implementation. UNV is working closely with its partners – and is honoured to be working so closely with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. To this end, UNV recommends a



consultative mechanism for Member States as an opportune forum to ensure that such efforts by multi-stakeholder are leveraged to engage people as volunteers in implementing and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals. UNV is seeking the Executive Board's agreement to convene such a mechanism, as a regular informal consultation with the Board. This would be an efficient and effective mechanism for regular consultation, providing guidance and oversight on implementation.

Second important reflection at mid-term, as noted earlier, implementing the Strategic Framework has been a learning process in strengthening UNV results-based management. Moreover, the strategic adjustments in UNV continue to reorient it within an evolving development landscape towards being a partner- and innovation-focused organization, poised to deliver greater results and returns in 2016-2017.

Finally, UNV will maintain an ambitious outlook, especially as regards UN Volunteer mobilization and resource mobilization, both vital to the development impact and financial sustainability of UNV in the long term.

Madam President,

The UNV strategic transformation underway, will provide critical inputs for the development of the next UNV Strategic Framework, 2018-2021. We strongly welcome further engagement of the Board and our partners as we continue that journey. Our strategic evolution and innovation is only possible with strong partnerships. Firstly, with our UN partners, like UNDP and the Department for Field Services – and like major players such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Moreover, UNV is grateful for the full-funding partnerships during the biennium, with the Governments of Belgium, Brazil, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Hong Kong SAR.

Contributions to the Special Voluntary Fund are critical for continued innovation in integrating volunteers and volunteering with United Nations partners. UNV has had Special Voluntary Fund partnerships during the biennium with the Governments of Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Czech Republic, China, Germany, India, Ireland, Israel, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Morocco, Switzerland, Sweden and Thailand.

I would like to seize this opportunity to reaffirm the importance of partnerships for UNV. I would like to seek further dialogue with you on the evolution of UNV, on fully funded UN Volunteers, the Special Voluntary Fund, our five programme areas and more. For this, I warmly invite you to the next UNV partnership forum, in October 2016, at our home in Bonn, Germany, titled '*Revitalising Partnerships; Volunteerism for the SDGs*'. In collaboration with Germany's Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, and the City of Bonn, we're excited at the prospect of welcoming:

- Member States, volunteer involving organisations and CSOs, such as: China, CUSO, ECOWAS, FK Norway, FORUM, France Volontaires, JICA, KOICA, Peace Corp, VSO, and more;
- Corporate Sector partners, such as: Credit Suisse, DHL, IBM, Impact 2030, Medtronic Microsoft, Phillips, Samsung, SAP and more.

At the forum we will have spaces for discussion specifically on South-South Cooperation, Corporate Sector volunteering, UNV's global programs, fully funding UN Volunteers, and more. The forum will also

showcase personal experiences of volunteers – demonstrating the profound impact volunteering has on their lives and those around them.

This forum is an opportunity for all partners to take a renewed look at volunteerism, the critical role of volunteers for SDGs, and the new innovations around volunteerism that UNV would like to co-create with partners to deliver solutions for Agenda 2030.