



**REMARKS BY**

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**ON THE OCCASION OF**

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**FINAL**

Thank you, Mr. Associate Administrator, for your introduction and your – and the Administrator’s – commitment to volunteerism and your strong support to the United Nations Volunteers programme.

***Mr. President,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Mr. Associate Administrator,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:***

The Annual Report presents the United Nations Volunteers programme’s 2018 results. There are three messages I would like to convey:

- ***First:*** UNV achieved strong programmatic and institutional results in the first year of its Strategic Framework 2018-2021.
- ***Second:*** UNV’s organisational transformation has improved the organisation’s agility and sustainability, in line with the UN reforms.
- ***Third:*** UNV is committed to delivering better volunteer solutions to the UN System across the three pillars, and to supporting Member States in their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

*[RESULTS]*

**Mr. President,**

Under its integrated results and resources matrix, UNV fully met 13 out of 18 targets for 2018. While 5 targets were not achieved, they are just a few percentage points below full achievement. These are the results of our strategic and organisational transformation implemented over 2017 and 2018. Specific UN Volunteer mobilization results include:

- Over 7,200 experienced UN Volunteers were deployed in 146 countries with 34 UN partners – an 11 per cent increase from 2017, after three consecutive years of decline. 47 per cent of these volunteers were female.
- 16,750 UN Online Volunteers served 47 UN entities in support of SDG implementation in 90 countries.

Let me highlight some achievements.

*[VOLUNTEERISM AS A MEANS OF IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA]*

2018 was a year filled with Member States' recognition of volunteerism as a means to deliver on the 2030 Agenda.

Of the 46 Voluntary National Reviews presented during last year's High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, 29 recognised volunteerism and 19 reported a positive contribution of volunteerism to the Goals. UNV provided technical advice to 11 countries to strengthen data analysis on volunteering in their reviews. Member States reported volunteers to be critical partners to implement and widen citizen participation in Agenda 2030.

During the 2018 High-Level Political Forum, UNV launched its flagship publication, *The 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report: The Thread that Binds – Volunteerism and Community Resilience*. This report presents evidence on how volunteerism strengthens community resilience, leaving no one behind, and localizing the 2030 Agenda.

UNV also compiled five regional synthesis reports as inputs into the five regional forums for sustainable development in 2019. These regional consultation outcomes will inform the 2020 Global Technical Meeting on volunteerism – a major milestone in the Plan of Action to integrate volunteering into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In this context, I would like to commend Member States for their adoption last year, at the GA 73<sup>rd</sup> session, of the Resolution on Volunteering for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, co-facilitated by Brazil and Japan, with a total of 124 Member State co-sponsors.

*[SUPPORT TO THE UN SYSTEM THROUGH ENGAGEMENT OF UN VOLUNTEERS]*

**Mr. President,**

To anticipate the needs of a reformed UN system, UNV has designed new volunteer categories, covering event, community, refugee and expert volunteers. By diversifying its services and having a closer presence to the ground through regionalisation, UNV secured an 11 per cent growth in the number of UN Volunteers.

### *[SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION]*

Over eighty per cent of all UN Volunteers and almost seventy per cent of international UN Volunteers are from the global South. The latter represents a major contribution to South-South cooperation, enabling people from the South to tackle development challenges based on their lived experience and knowledge. Last year we signed an MOU with the UN Office of South South Cooperation, which resulted in our strong engagement in BAPA +40. I would like to thank the Office of South South Cooperation for their strong partnership with us.

### *[GENDER & INCLUSION]*

In line with the UN System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity and the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021, UNV contributed to UN partners' efforts in achieving full gender parity. In 2018, the gender ratio of UN Volunteers remained stable at 47 per cent females.

In peacekeeping missions, where traditionally there is a gender imbalance, the female ratio increased slightly from 33 to 34 per cent thanks to UNV intentionally sourcing qualified female candidates. Furthermore, UNV's concerted efforts to "walk the talk" resulted in 57 per cent of UNV personnel being women.

UNV continued to promote inclusion within the UN system to "leave no one behind". For example, under a joint UNHCR-UNV project funded by the Government of Germany, 146 Refugee Outreach Volunteers in Kenya's Kakuma refugee camp were mobilized and trained.

In promoting youth engagement within the UN system, the proportion of UN Youth Volunteers under the age of 30 increased from 8 per cent in 2017 to 11 per cent in 2018. UNV continues to engage with the UN Youth Envoy, UNV participated in developing the UN Youth Strategy and UNV has expanded its Youth Volunteers thanks also to a stronger partnership with both UNICEF and UNFPA.

UNV also continued its efforts to engage persons with disabilities as UN Volunteers in the UN system through the UNV-UNDP Talent Programme for Young Professionals with Disabilities, and while progress is slow, the Talent Programme will steadily increase in 2019.

*[ONLINE VOLUNTEERING]*

UNV also expanded opportunities for people to contribute to peace, development and humanitarian efforts through its Online Volunteering Service. In 2018, almost 16,750 Online Volunteers served. Of those 60 per cent were women, 67 per cent were young people, and 4 per cent were persons with disabilities.

*[INTERNAL TRANSFORMATION & INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE]*

**Mr. President,**

Last year, UNV completed its organisational transformation, which enables us to operate more effectively and efficiently. Following the regionalisation and global structural changes, UNV professionalized and nationalized its country-level presences and consolidated them from 79 to 60 countries, in line with the Executive Board's decisions 88/46 and 90/45.

UNV also implemented the 2017 UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations recommendation by improving its governance arrangements and risk management controls.

UNV further fine-tuned the volunteer management business processes, reducing processing times, improving accountability, and increasing efficiency through decentralised functions. Key performance indicators are in place to monitor the steps in sourcing, recruiting, deploying and managing UN Volunteers, measured in real-time.

Overall, achievements from the transformation include right-sizing and decentralizing the staffing structure from our superb Headquarters in Bonn, Germany, reducing costs and aligning expenses with available financial resources for future years. As a result, UNV's overall costs decreased by 11 per cent (or \$2.5 million) in 2018 compared to 2017.

*[FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE]*

For 2018, the total financial volume of UNV activities was \$200 million – an increase of five million compared to 2017, mainly attributable to the increase in the number of UN Volunteers deployed.

Regular resources contributed to UNV by Member States through UNDP remained steady at \$8.8 million, though this is lower than the UNDP integrated budget estimates for 2018-2021 of \$10.6 million per year.

In terms of this financial performance, there are three takeaways:

- 1) Activities related to UN Volunteer deployment and management remain UNV's core business, accounting for 85 per cent of the overall financial volume;
- 2) Regular 'core' resources provided by Member States to UNV through UNDP are critical to the organisational sustainability; and
- 3) The Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) provides critical funding to support the implementation of UNV's entire Strategic Framework, especially UNV's advocacy and advisory services for volunteerism as an effective means of implementation and people engagement in the 2030 Agenda.

In 2018, SVF contributions were \$5.2 million, a 40 per cent increase compared to 2017. UNV would like to thank the Governments of Bangladesh, China, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Sweden, Switzerland and Thailand for their generous contributions in the reporting period. I encourage additional Member States to contribute to the fund in the future.

Contributions for the Full Funded volunteer assignments grew by 18 per cent to \$15.6 million in 2018. UNV is grateful for the full-funding partnerships with the Governments of the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Sweden and Switzerland.

*[LOOKING FORWARD]*

**Mr. President,**

Building on these results, I would now like to highlight three priorities on UNV's horizon.

**First**, as the secretariat for the Plan of Action to integrate volunteering into Agenda 2030, UNV will continue building stronger alliances for research and evidence, advisory services, policy engagement and multi-stakeholder partnerships to deliver on the 2030 Agenda through volunteerism.

**Second,** UNV will deliver better volunteer solutions to UN partners in the three areas of UN reform by:

- Strengthening collaboration with the UN Secretariat through the implementation of the new memorandum of understanding, including tailor-made solutions to the delinked Resident Coordinator Offices and UN Country Teams;
- Supporting UNDP's integrator role through sourcing and mobilizing talented UN Volunteers; and
- Simplifying the UN Volunteer Conditions of Service in line with the transformation and audit recommendations.

**Third,** UNV will continue to be fit for purpose by:

- Containing costs and pursuing further efficiency gains; and
- Embarking on an innovative digital transformation, through automation, artificial intelligence, block chain and online platform integration.

*[CLOSING]*

In summary, the first year of UNV's new Strategic Framework saw UNV expand and diversify its services to the UN system and to Member States, and improve its organisational sustainability.

I would like to thank Member States for their strategic guidance throughout the transformation; and would also like to thank the leadership of UNDP and UNV's UN partners for their continuous support.

I would also like to thank all of my colleagues in UNV who were instrumental to these solid results in 2018.

Finally, our successes are the results of all UN Volunteers – online and onsite – who are true inspiration in action. I would like to thank every one of them for their dedication.

Thank you.