A world with eight billion volunteers

5 December 2023, Bonn, Germany: Today is International Volunteer Day and this year’s theme is “If everyone did…”

More than a billion volunteer around the world act for solidarity and humanity for people and planet. IVD is a day to pay tribute to volunteers worldwide and to recognize the value of volunteerism in peace and development.

The theme of IVD this year centers on the power of everyone – collective action – if everyone did. If everyone volunteered the world would be a better place. Imagine more than eight billion of us volunteering. Limitless possibilities for sustainable development – food and education for everyone, clean environment and good health, inclusive and peaceful societies, and more.

As the world garners support to deal with mounting challenges, it’s the volunteers who are the first ones to help. Volunteers are at the fore in crises and emergencies, often in very testing and dire situations.

“On this important day, let’s re-commit to ensuring that all people can lend their energies to shaping a better future for all people and the planet we share. Let’s stand with volunteers, everywhere.” António Guterres, Secretary-General, United Nations.

IVD activities are taking place around the world including seven high-level events co-hosted by Governments in Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Iraq, Ireland, Tanzania, Thailand, and Togo.

From the national caravan of volunteering in Togo to the climate-conscious activities of tree planting in Azerbaijan to the wheelchair journey of volunteers with disabilities in Thailand — each event amplifies the diversity of volunteering around the globe.

Countries and volunteer groups will mark the spirit of volunteerism together with communities, academia, volunteer-involving organizations, and UN agencies. UNV Staff at Headquarters in Bonn will also participate in a volunteering activity to mark IVD and demonstrate the spirit of volunteerism among local residents.

“Today I say to all volunteers around the globe: Thank you. For choosing to improve the world. For finding inspiration to act. For creating solutions. For keeping our hopes alive. And to the world our message is: Imagine what we could achieve if all joined in. And volunteered.” Toily Kurbanov, Executive Coordinator, United Nations Volunteers.

Keeping the tone of solidarity in crisis and conflict, we wish everyone peace on IVD 2023.
The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme provides global citizens with an opportunity to volunteer across the three pillars of the United Nations system: development; peace and security; and human rights.

Administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNV advocates for the recognition of volunteers, works with partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and helps to mobilize volunteers throughout the world.

UNV is active in some 160 countries worldwide and represents over 170 nationalities.

International Volunteer Day (IVD), on 5 December, was designated by the UN in 1985 as an international observance to celebrate the power and potential of volunteerism.

Join us in recognizing volunteers worldwide through our social media campaign: #IfEveryoneDid #IVD2023

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Contact Information:
Jennifer Stapper
Communications Global Team Lead
External Relations and Communications Section
United Nations Volunteers
Jennifer.Stapper@unv.org
www.unv.org