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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY
FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

5 December 2018

There are approximately 1 billion volunteers across the globe, who dedicate their time, skills and passion to make the world a better place. They are often the first to act in moments of crisis. They create social bonds and give a voice to marginalized and vulnerable groups. And as the theme of this year's observance highlights, they help build resilient communities, equipping people against natural disasters, political instability, economic shocks and other pressures.

In Malawi, UN volunteers have worked as interpreters, connecting refugees to institutions that provide assistance. In Sri Lanka, they have helped develop a project to empower women and youth to participate in peacebuilding efforts. In Tuvalu, UN volunteers have collaborated with the Ministry of Health to strengthen community safeguards against tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.

The diverse and dynamic role of volunteerism in promoting the Sustainable Development Goals merits strong support from Governments and other stakeholders. On this International Day, I thank volunteers for their efforts to leave no one behind.