



**Statement by Olivier Adam,
Executive Coordinator**

**United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme
on International Volunteer Day (IVD) 2018**

This International Volunteer Day 2018, we celebrate the work of volunteers everywhere, with a focus on local volunteers working at the community level. We recognize the many ways in which people are dedicating their time to make communities more resilient against natural disasters, economic stresses and political shocks.

Actions from around the globe reflect how volunteers are truly *inspiration in action*. The scale and scope of volunteer activity in responding to shocks and stresses are unparalleled. Our State of the World's Volunteerism Report 2018 shows that the efforts of more than 1 billion volunteers is equivalent to a workforce of 109 million people engaging for a better world.

It is on the ground, in their local communities, that we really see the unique impact of volunteers. For example, UN Volunteers are facilitating the [local integration of Syrian asylum-seekers](#) in Armenia, including those who themselves have escaped the conflict. While in [Afghanistan](#), UN Volunteers have [brought together youth and religious leaders](#) in dialogue on gender equality, exemplifying the power of volunteerism in bringing communities together, giving voice to marginalized groups and weaving a stronger social fabric.

Volunteerism does not just create resilience in the region or in the community where the work takes place, but it also brings diverse peoples together by supporting South-South knowledge exchange. This positive chain of impact can be seen in actions in [Kenya](#), where a data mapping software developed by online volunteers tracks incidents of post-electoral violence. Then, through online cooperation, volunteers in [Mexico](#) replicated this tracking system to build emergency translation software which was important in rescue operations during the 2017 earthquake in the country.

Volunteering helps communities to take control and to shape their own futures. In a world evolving rapidly, local volunteers play a crucial role in bringing the United Nations commitment to leave no one behind to fruition. [UN Volunteers in Tokelau and Samoa](#), for example, have worked towards ensuring that communities that live in isolated, fragile ecosystems are made fuel-efficient and resilient to natural disasters.

With their selfless dedication, volunteers create a strong sense of solidarity in communities. They give us hope and demonstrate the power of working together to build solutions that work for everyone.

Today, on International Volunteer Day 2018, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to volunteers everywhere, including the thousands of UN Volunteers who are part of the UN family, for setting such an outstanding example for all of us.

