

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

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# **National UN Volunteers. Policy Note**

## Abbreviations

CBO	Community-Based Organization
COS	Conditions of Service (for national UN Volunteers)
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
DOA	Description of Assignment
MOSS	Minimum Operating Security Standards
MORSS	Minimum Operating Residential Security Standards
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
UNDSS	UN Department of Safety and Security
VLA	Volunteer Living Allowance
VRS	Volunteer Reporting System

**Note:** The accepted terminology is *national UN Volunteer*. This should not be abbreviated.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Policy Note describes the policies and key procedures that guide the recruitment and management of national UN Volunteers. It replaces the policy aspects of the national UN Volunteer Guidance Note dated March 1998.

In light of this Policy Note, the Conditions of Service for national UN Volunteers have been amended and expanded. Also, a set of Operational Guidelines will be drafted to provide an outline of processes and procedures which are integral to the management of national UN volunteer assignments, but which are not detailed in either the Policy Note or COS.

### 1.1. Why this Note?

Since 1998, various ad-hoc changes have been made in the policies and procedures for national UN Volunteers, and they need to be reflected in an updated Note. The environment in which UNV operates has also changed. In particular, United Nations efforts are now focused sharply on supporting developing countries to undergo transformations and achieve their Millennium Development Goals (MDG) as well as positioning the UN in the post MDGs sustainable development agenda. UNV's contribution to the MDGs achievement and the post MDGs agenda will be delivered through its Programme Strategy the implementation of which is premised on provision of new products and services including a robust and viable national volunteering modality.

In addition, lessons have been learned from the experience over the last 13 years. Many of these lessons were captured in the 2009 Review of the national UN volunteer's modality, and elaborated on through the deliberations of a Reference Group meeting periodically within UNV HQ during 2010-11.

### 1.2. The 2009 Review

The purpose of this review was to “reflect on the current state of the modality and how it applies to the larger goals and mission of UNV; to identify areas of improvement on the modality; and to make recommendations on how the modality can more effectively achieve UNV's larger goals and mission of volunteerism.” The review was asked to take account of UNV's three key objectives: advocating globally for volunteerism and development, integrating volunteerism in development programming, and mobilizing volunteers for peace and development.

The review found that national UN Volunteers were much appreciated by the majority of host agencies and that the recruitment process was “quick and efficient”. At the same time, it determined that “the implementation of the national UN Volunteer modality is not currently aligned with its goals.” In particular, the review found that most national UN Volunteers had little opportunity to promote volunteerism. Also, while national UN Volunteer policy is “to serve others without concern for financial gain” the review found that “monetary compensation was one of the main motivating factors for people to choose becoming a national UN Volunteer.” The review also pointed out that volunteer living allowance (VLA) was applied inconsistently: the relationship between the VLA and the actual living Costs varied widely from one country to another.

A third area of concern was capacity development. The UN General Assembly and the UNDP Executive Board have repeatedly stressed the need for UN programmes to focus their efforts on building national capacities. However, the review found that many national UN Volunteers were doing work that “should be performed by staff members” and that the host agencies had “become dependent on the support of national UN Volunteers to effectively provide their services.” The review recommended that “the projects and programmes where national UN Volunteers are contracted should have a clear capacity building component whereby a designated organization will be able to assume the responsibilities determined by the project upon completion of the national UN Volunteer’s assignment.”

### 1.3. The Work of the Reference Group 2010-11

Following the 2009 Review a Reference Group was established within UNV Headquarters to follow-up on a number of unclear or outdated policy areas. This group has researched, consulted and advised on a number of important issues: the duration of service as a UN Volunteer under either international or national modalities; eligibility for ‘non-nationals’; the types and extent of allowances and entitlements; possible mechanisms for adjusting VLA rates; alignment of security provision for national UN Volunteers with that for national UN staff; approaches to and procedures for the recruitment, rostering, performance monitoring, and end of assignment review for national UN Volunteers.

Finally, the Group attempted to identify any ‘national volunteer’ type programmes being implemented at country or international level anywhere in the world, other than that of the UN, and once identified to compare the various conditions of service. This piece of research did not reveal any programmes with direct comparable modalities to that of the national UN Volunteer, but rather confirmed the unique and ‘cutting edge’ nature of the national UN Volunteer modality. A handful of organizations were identified supporting full-time national volunteer development workers and these emphasized the importance of non-financial incentives in the conditions of service, as well as supporting volunteers through professional development.

## **2. DEFINITION, MANDATE, AND PURPOSES OF NATIONAL UN VOLUNTEERS**

### **2.1. Definition**

National UN Volunteers are volunteers mobilized by UNV on the request of a programme country to support peace and development programmes in that country. They are citizens of the country.

Non-nationals can serve as national UN Volunteers if they reside legally in the host country, are recognised as stateless or refugees, and if such service is in compliance with national law of the host country. Non-nationals may also serve as national UN Volunteers where programmes are run outside the beneficiary country, for example, due to security reasons. Non-nationals other than those in the situations described above cannot serve as national UN Volunteers.

Where UN Volunteers have more than one nationality, they must choose one. It should also be noted that UN Volunteers cannot serve in the same country under first one modality and then the other.

National UN Volunteers are assigned to a Host Agency which is a UN organization or entity that requested the service of the national UN Volunteer.

### **2.2. Mandate**

The national UN Volunteer modality was formally established in 1992 through the UNDP Governing Council decision 92/35, which called for “greater mobilization of human resources in developing countries through mixed teams of international and national volunteers in UNV activities.”

In decision 2006/18 the UNDP Executive Board welcomed “the increased involvement of nationally recruited volunteers in UNV activities and encouraged continued efforts in this direction, noting its potential for capacity development and sustainability.”

In decision 2008/22 the Board called on UN organizations to “continue efforts to integrate volunteerism into their policies, programmes and reports, including those relating to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.” The Board also enlarged the scope of UNV activities by encouraging UNV “to engage in community-level natural resources management and climate mitigation and adaptation activities.”

In addition, through Resolution 31/131 of 16 December 1976, the UN General Assembly decided that UNV was “a major operational unit of the United Nations for the execution of youth programmes.”

### **2.3. Purposes**

2.3.1. Together with international UN Volunteers and other UN project personnel, national UN Volunteers contribute to a programme or project, the neutrality and visibility of the United Nations and the institutional back-up of the UN system. Compared with other UN personnel, national UN Volunteers add value with their knowledge of local languages, cultural, social and economic conditions, and their capacity to work at the local level. National UN Volunteers are particularly well-placed to nurture capacities at the community level, foster ownership and sustainability, and contribute to achieving the MDGs.



2.3.2. The specific purposes of national UN Volunteer assignments are to:

- Support transformation processes at the local level, if needed in context specific customized manner, by strengthening the capacities of communities and governments, so communities can effectively participate in development activities and access government services,
- Promote social inclusion and empowerment of marginalized communities,
- Encourage national and local volunteer initiatives (volunteerism), and
- Promote sustainability and ownership of development and peace building activities at the local level.
- Enhance the skills, expertise and capacity of the national UN Volunteers themselves.

### **3. PARAMETERS AND GUIDELINES OF NATIONAL UN VOLUNTEERS ASSIGNMENTS**

As an aid to implementing the broad aims set out in section 1, the following parameters and guidelines should be adhered to when employing national UN Volunteers:

#### **3.1. Volunteerism**

3.1.1. National UN Volunteers have made a conscious decision to sacrifice personal convenience and comfort in order to serve others. In recognition of this, the Host Agency provides the national UN Volunteer with the time and opportunity to encourage and support local *volunteer initiatives*, preferably in support of the Host Agency's work programme or otherwise enhancing United Nations relations with the target communities.

3.1.2. National UN Volunteers can facilitate valuable linkages between international or central government personnel and local officials and community groups.

#### **3.2. Capacity Development**

The national UN Volunteer helps to develop capacities in three ways:

3.2.1. Every assignment should aim to nurture capacities, especially at the community level. While this may entail providing specialized technical assistance, it refers primarily to activities that enhance social capital and help transform people's lives. Similarly, it aims at encouraging volunteer initiatives and building on indigenous traditions of volunteering.

3.2.2. The second objective is to strengthen the capacity of a local government agency or other institution at the district or community level. The role of the national UN Volunteer is not simply to fill a gap, but to assist the agency to build its capacity and enable the agency to sustain the relevant programmes over a longer time period.

3.2.3. As a third objective, the assignment should enable the national UN Volunteer to strengthen his or her own capacities and skills particularly for young volunteers.

The UNV Field Unit ensures that the Description of Assignment (DoA) contains specific indicators of how success will be measured in these three areas.

### 3.3. Knowledge sharing

Every national UN Volunteer assignment is a unique opportunity to learn from experience and to feedback ideas that can help improve peace and development activities. Using knowledge networks, the Volunteer Reporting System (VRS), and other means, the national UN Volunteer promotes knowledge building by using or creating linkages to share information among various actors, including community-based organizations (CBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local authorities and national governments.

### 3.4. Suitable role for national UN Volunteers

Within the overall framework outlined in sections 2.1 and 2.2, national UN Volunteers should be assigned to roles where they can most strategically impact on the lives of the poor. The emphasis should be on innovation and community mobilization. Assignments should be time-bound and capacity-building must be an integral part of every assignment. For these reasons, the UNV Field Unit ensures that the Description of Assignment is tailored individually to the tasks that the national UN Volunteer will undertake and sets out clearly his/her role in capacity building and working towards the agreed sustainability focused exit.

The following is a sample of typical national UN Volunteer roles. It is emphasized that these are just examples. UNV encourages creativity in order to better satisfy the purposes of the national UN Volunteer programme.

#### *3.4.1. Development roles:*

- Supporting volunteerism, national volunteer programmes and other volunteer initiatives;
- Nurturing capacities to participate in community affairs, particularly by youth, women and marginalized groups;
- Training government departments, NGOs and CBOs on needs analysis, organizational matters, project preparation, leadership and negotiation with external bodies such as funding agencies;
- Providing technical expertise and training in various areas, such as health, education, sustainable livelihoods, gender mainstreaming, agricultural extension, micro-credit, management of the environment, and rural infrastructure.

#### *3.4.2. Peace roles:*

- Working in civil affairs, human rights education and monitoring, child protection, public information and outreach, community mobilization, refugee integration, repatriation and resettlement, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, and livelihoods.

### 3.4.3. Unsuitable roles:

The following roles are not considered suitable for national UN Volunteers:

- Assignments where the volunteer has a Description of Assignment that is virtually identical to the terms of reference or job description of a regular staff member of the Host Agency, where the volunteer purely delivers administrative tasks to simply fill a gap or replace a staff member. Situations, where a volunteer has duties that are very similar to those of a regular staff of the Host Agency, should be avoided, as they can lead to invidious comparisons and undermine the spirit of volunteering. Also, they can potentially upset the local labour market.
- Roles where a volunteer has a *fiduciary responsibility*, to commit funds, approves budgets or makes the final approval for recruitment and procurement actions for the Host Agency.
- Assignments that do not integrate capacity building in the Host Agency or in other relevant entities.
- Assignments in a country that is not eligible to receive assistance from the UN.

### 3.5. Host Agency responsibilities

Host agencies for national UN Volunteers have responsibilities that mirror the parameters described above.

#### 3.5.1. Volunteerism:

The Host Agency, in collaboration with the UNV Field Unit, should ensure that this objective is reflected meaningfully in the national UN Volunteer's assignment and that national UN Volunteers are not treated simply as a supplement to the agency's own staff. Nonetheless, national UN Volunteers may find themselves with co-workers who have been engaged on other terms, including standard commercial rates for a job. Such situations can lead to tensions and undermine the morale of national UN Volunteers. The Host Agency manages this situation by ensuring, among other things, that national UN Volunteers enjoy the same non-financial benefits as other workers, including the opportunity to participate in training and similar events.

#### 3.5.2. Capacity Development:

The Host Agency in collaboration with the UNV Field Unit ensures that the Description of Assignment contains specific indicators of how to measure the success of the assignment in terms of the contribution to capacity development.

#### 3.5.3. Learning:

The Host Agency ensures that the national UN Volunteer has the same access to learning resources as staff, including access to the internet.

The Host Agency should fully prepare the arrival of the UN Volunteer and familiarize him or her with the agency and the context where he or she will operate.

### 3.6. Security

National UN Volunteers and their recognized Primary Family Unit, as defined in the Conditions of Service, are covered by the UN Security Management System and its relevant UN Security Plan for each country of assignment, in the same way that UN national staff is covered. In their assignment, they are subject to the Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS). Prior to finalizing a Description of Assignment, the UNV Field Unit will work with the local UN Security Office to ensure that the place of working is adequately safe and secure. National UN Volunteers may not be placed in situations that are more hazardous than those in which any other UN official or expert would be placed. In the event that security conditions necessitate relocation or evacuation of UN personnel, national UN Volunteers are treated the same as UN national staff. In common with other nationally-recruited UN personnel, national UN Volunteers are not subject to the Minimum Operating Residential Security Standards (MORSS).

## **4. TYPES OF NATIONAL UN VOLUNTEERS**

### 4.1. Commitment to Service

A key feature of all national UN Volunteers is a personal *commitment to service*. Financial compensation is limited to what is required to meet basic living expenses, as explained in section 8. The commitment to service is emphasized in advertisements and is assessed in the recruitment and interview process. Within these broad parameters, the required qualifications, competencies and experience are set out in the individual Description of Assignment.

### 4.2. National UN Volunteer Profile

Given the very wide variety of roles that are entrusted to national UN Volunteers, and the equally wide variety of duty stations where they may be located (from capital city to small town or village), there is no typical profile for a national UN Volunteer. For each national UN Volunteer assignment, specific requirements in terms of education, age and experience as well as required competencies are set out in the individual Description of Assignment. As explained in section 8, the national UN Volunteer living allowance can vary from one location to another, where there are substantial differences in basic living costs, but all national UN Volunteers in a given location receive the same allowance, regardless of age, qualifications or experience except where young UN Volunteers are recruited under a youth modality whose living expenses may be relatively lower than those of mature volunteers.

### 4.3. Age Limits

As a matter of principle, there should be no age limits to volunteering one's services to promote peace and development. However, in order to ensure the required level of professional and personal competency, the minimum age of a national UN Volunteer has been set at 22 years of age, with the understanding that

candidates must demonstrate the required level of education, relevant professional experience and the requisite maturity, character and strengths in order to be selected as UN Volunteers.<sup>1</sup>

The UNV programme, in strongly encouraging volunteerism at all ages above the minimum age limit and will accept well-qualified and suitable older candidates to serve as national UN Volunteers up to an age covered by the life insurance carrier.

#### 4.4. Groups of national UN Volunteers

National UN Volunteers have flexibility to accommodate a wide-range of assignments. They can, broadly, be categorized into three groups:

##### *4.4.1. Specialists volunteers:*

National UN Volunteer specialists are those with professional technical skills who have at least a bachelor's degree or equivalent professional experience.

*4.4.2. Community volunteers:* Community UN Volunteers are those with strong community presence, local knowledge and networks who often live and work in their own communities and tend to have at least a high-school diploma. Community UN Volunteers are not supposed to be recruited for assignment suitable for volunteer specialists.

##### *4.4.3. Youth volunteers:*

Youth volunteering is strongly encouraged by UNV and is part of its mandate. The UN Secretary General in his Five Year Action Agenda (2012) also called on UNV to establish a UN Youth Volunteer modality. UNV's policy and strategy including age parameters for youth will be determined and guided by a separate policy note and therefore items related to youth are not fully covered by this policy note. It must also be borne in mind that youth volunteer schemes can entail a significant management workload. This must be considered when deciding how best to provide such support.

##### *4.4.5. Other volunteers:*

UNV also welcomes volunteers who have broad experience and may be in receipt of a UN pension or have other private means and who are willing to forego the Volunteer Living Allowance but in all other respects to accept national UN volunteer terms. The standard requirements, such as the need for a Description of Assignment, an interview, and a Letter of Offer, are the same as for any other national UN Volunteer.

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<sup>1</sup> As per the UNV mandate and in response to the SG Five Year Action Agenda (2012), UNV will be establishing a Global Youth Volunteering Modality which will target young people whose age group may be different from what is outlined in this policy note and related conditions of service.

#### 4.5. Language requirements for national UN Volunteers

All national UN Volunteers should be able to read and write and communicate effectively in one or more local languages, and be able to communicate in the UN working language in the country. The last requirement may not apply in the case of community and youth volunteers.

#### 4.6. Duration of assignments

The duration of assignments of national UN Volunteers may vary. However, the minimum service period for a UN Volunteer is three months, and the maximum period of service, whether under one assignment or accumulated over several assignments is four years. No extensions beyond the four-year limit are considered, since a national UN Volunteer assignment is not a career. However, in order to enable individuals who have served as UN Volunteers at an early stage during their career to serve again later in life, one can serve as a national UN Volunteer again when a minimum of ten years have passed since the end of the previous national UN Volunteer service period even if the previous period was for the full four year period.

#### 4.7. End of assignment

UNV recognizes that national UN Volunteers completing their service may need to make a transition to a paid job. UNV will help this transition in various ways, such as by ensuring that a performance appraisal is completed for all UN Volunteers and by providing a certificate of service.

### **5. PROGRAMMING**

#### 5.1. Identifying opportunities

In keeping with the principles of capacity development, sustainability and results-based management, national UNV assignments must be designed as part of a coherent national UN programme framework and UNV Programme Strategy aimed at achieving national humanitarian, peace and development results. In countries with a harmonized programme cycle, this means that a national UN Volunteer assignment should contribute to the achievement of an outcome of the UNDAF and of a specific output of the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) or other planning framework. For countries in complex situations, such as peace-keeping or emergency humanitarian operations, there may be a 'strategic framework' to support while in other countries the framework may be provided by a Security Council Resolution.

Integration with the UNDAF and CPAP, strategic frameworks and applicable Security Council Resolutions will help to guarantee that the assignment contributes in a measurable way towards the achievement of peace and development results in a sustainable manner, and further international norms and standards, such as women's rights, children's rights, minorities' rights and so on. In the absence of such frameworks, the UNV Field Unit consults with the prospective Host Agency to clarify how the assignment will contribute to the achievement of sustainable peace and development results and further the aims of the relevant human rights conventions. The Description of Assignment includes an explanation of the linkage between the assignment and the peace and development results.

## 5.2. Description of Assignment

5.2.1. Once an area of support as 4.1 above has been identified, the UNV Field Unit works with the entity responsible for the project (the Host Agency) to draw up the Description of Assignment for the national UN Volunteer. The UNV Field Unit follows the template for the Description of Assignment, ensuring that it complies with UNV's policies and priorities as outlined in sections 1 to 3 above.

5.2.2. The Description of Assignment must be signed by a duly authorized representative of the Host Agency and by the UNV Field Unit as authorized by the UNV HQ as the second signatory. The UNV Field Unit sends the Description of Assignment along with a copy of the relevant programme document to UNV HQ for approval, and with a request to confirm the availability of funding.

## **6. RECRUITMENT**

### 6.1 Principles

The following general principles must be adhered to in the recruitment process:

6.1.1. UNV applies the standard UN principles of competitiveness and transparency and of giving equal opportunities to women and minorities.

6.1.2. Where demands for recruitment of national volunteers are high, UNV will generally establish a local roster of candidates for national volunteer assignments. In addition, special outreach activities will be undertaken to identify suitable candidates for a volunteer assignment. In all cases, candidates must undergo a competitive interview process to ensure transparency of the system. The UNV Field Units will be responsible for constituting interview panels in close consultation with the Host Agency.

6.1.3. To ensure that women and minority candidates get adequate opportunities to apply, the UNV Field Unit ensures that advertisements and application forms are accessible to them (e.g. not only through the internet), and that oversight measures are in place to support inclusion of applicants from marginalized groups.

6.1.4. Promotional work should focus on networking and outreach into the volunteer community of the programme country, rather than the standard channels that might be used by the UN offices, as emphasis must be on attracting volunteers and not mirroring UN staff recruitment activities.

6.1.5. In addition to technical qualifications, candidates are judged on their motivation to *serve others* rather than a desire for financial reward. In the interview process, the UNV Field Unit pays particular attention to the candidate's track record, motivation and attitude to volunteerism, as well as to other personal qualities such as team spirit and leadership that are likely to make them successful in their assignments as UN Volunteers, while the Host Agency representative assesses the technical skills of the candidate.

## 7. TRAINING OF NATIONAL UN VOLUNTEERS

### 7.1. Key principles

To maximize the value of national UN Volunteer assignments aimed at contributing to national capacity development efforts, the UNV Field Unit, in collaboration where possible with the Host Agency, supports that national UN Volunteers benefit from relevant training opportunities provided by their host agencies and UNV. In addition to providing information necessary to carry out the technical aspects of an assignment, training plays an important role in building the confidence and self-esteem of national UN Volunteers, engendering a team spirit among UN Volunteers, identifying ways that UN Volunteers can be most effective in supporting transformation, assisting the country to achieve their national development plans, and exploring how to promote volunteerism in the country. Training of national UN Volunteers is also, fundamentally, a significant contribution to national capacity development.

### 7.2. Training allowance

National UN Volunteers have a training allowance which is the same amount as for the international UN Volunteers and is made available on the same conditions. National UN Volunteers may use these funds to take training courses that are relevant to their assignment. Additionally, national UN Volunteers have fair and equal access to Host Agency training resources to the extent the training relates to the assignment of the UN Volunteers. UN Volunteers working in specific projects should also benefit from training budgets in the project which must be considered during project formulation and budget planning.

### 7.3. Initial briefing

The UNV Field Unit provides an initial briefing to the candidate on the work of UNV, the role of volunteers, the nature of the project and of the national UN Volunteer's assignment, relevant information about the Host Agency, lines of reporting, and reporting requirements. The UNV Field Unit, UNDP and UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) staff provide a briefing on administrative and security matters. Security training must be completed at this time.

### 7.4. Induction course

New national UN Volunteers attend an induction course organized by the UNV Field Unit at the national level as soon as possible after taking up their assignment. This course takes a more in-depth look at the national development context, the work of UNV, and exploring the ways volunteering can be promoted in the country.

### 7.5. Workshops and retreats in the course of an assignment

In addition to or in place of the induction course, the UNV Field Unit arranges a workshop or retreat at least once a year for both national and international UN Volunteers. The aim of these events is not only to provide additional induction briefing but also to build capacities for promotion of volunteerism in the country. UNV considers these events a sound investment in volunteerism in the country, as well as an investment in the capacities of the UN Volunteers themselves. The costs of these events are met principally from the UN Volunteer training funds, and Host Agency resources, where applicable. If



volunteer numbers are large or where the volunteers are located in far-flung places, more than one workshop or retreat in more easily reached locations may be arranged.

#### 7.6. Training provided by the Host Agency

As indicated in section 2.5, the Host Agency is expected to provide, at its expense, equal opportunity to national UNV Volunteers to participate in training courses and workshops as it offers to its own staff. Such provision will also be included in the MOUs concluded between the UNV and the Host Agency Headquarters. While preparing the Description of Assignment, the UNV Field Unit ensures that the Host Agency is informed about and agrees to this equal opportunity provision. The UNV Field Unit should verify that funds for such training are included in the relevant programme or project budgets.

### **8. MONITORING**

#### 8.1. Assignment monitoring

The UNV Field Unit supports the national UN Volunteers through regular visits to the project sites, through meetings with the national UN Volunteers and staff of the host agencies, and by responding to the periodic reports prepared by the national UN Volunteers. The main role of the UNV Field Unit is to verify that expectations on all sides are realistic, to ensure that any obstacles to the successful completion of an assignment are noticed at an early stage and resolved in a timely manner, and to facilitate linkage between the national UN Volunteer's periodic reports and other documents on reporting. Experience has shown that the most successful projects are often those that the UNV Field Unit was able to monitor regularly and where it could provide strong support to the national UN Volunteers on the ground.

#### 8.2. Volunteer assignment review

The UNV Field Unit participates regularly in the UN country planning and programming frames or other applicable monitoring and reporting processes to assist in assessing the national UN Volunteers contribution to capacity development and the higher-level outcomes. An important tool in this process is a standardized performance appraisal of every national UN Volunteer assignment, referred to as a 'volunteer performance appraisal mechanism'. The reporting system should support the communication of these results.

### **9. VOLUNTEER LIVING ALLOWANCE (VLA)**

9.1. National UN Volunteers are not paid a salary for their services. Instead they are provided with a living allowance (VLA) which is intended to cover basic living expenses. The allowance is modest which enables the volunteer to live in basic but adequate and safe conditions thereby reflecting the volunteer spirit and volunteer character of the assignment. The allowance is set based on a common and standard yardstick

and methodology for all countries. The allowance should not be at a level that might attract someone to leave Government or NGO service, as UNV policy is to avoid any draining of national capacities.

9.2. The process for establishing and revising the allowance is managed by UNV headquarters, following common standards that are applied globally and can produce specific VLA rates for each Duty Station. VLA rates for all duty stations are periodically reviewed and adjusted (normally on a yearly basis). More frequent reviews can take place where warranted by exceptional circumstances.

9.3. The Volunteer Living Allowance is a lump sum that is designed to cover basic living expenses, including housing and personal transport. The allowance is established and paid in the same currency as paid to UN regular national staff.

## **10. FAMILY ALLOWANCE**

National UN Volunteers do not receive any special allowances for family members, but rather a single VLA. However, as noted in section 2.6, recognized members of the Primary Family Unit (PFU) are covered by the UN security arrangements for national UN Volunteers. In addition, up to three members of the recognized PFU living in the country of the duty station are covered by the health insurance plan provided to the national UN Volunteer.

## **11. TRAVEL EXPENSES**

When a national UN Volunteer has to travel and stay overnight at a place other than his or her duty station, covering the related costs is not considered as an entitlement or allowance. Rather such costs are a local issue and as such should be managed through country-level practices applied by the Host Agency. National UN Volunteers should not be subject to any discriminatory practices on these issues as compared to national staff of the Host Agency. This policy will apply irrespective of whether the Host Agency is an NGO, government department, UN agency or other entity.

## **12. NATIONAL COORDINATION BODY**

UNV encourages the formation of a national coordination body with the aim of coordinating volunteerism activities among voluntary organizations such as International Volunteer Day (IVD) and advocating for volunteerism in general at the national level. The body promotes volunteerism as a means to support national development programmes and projects, and may advise on any issues relating to national volunteerism but it is not mandated to steer the administration of the national UN Volunteer modality. The body may be comprised of representatives of the Government, UN, NGOs and CBOs with engagements in volunteering. The UNV Field Unit should support the formation and work of this coordination body.

## **13. CONCLUSION**

This Policy Note is applicable in conjunction with the national UN Volunteer Conditions of Service and other applicable guidelines which may be devised to guide the implementation of the modality.