



## **Plan of Action**

to integrate volunteering  
into the 2030 Agenda

**A PLAN OF ACTION  
SYNTHESIS REPORT ON**

**INTEGRATING  
VOLUNTEERING INTO  
THE 2030 AGENDA**

**IN  
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

# CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. The 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3. Key trends in volunteering in Asia and the Pacific .....</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1. Strengthening people's ownership of the SDGs .....	11
Implementing a people-centred approach to the SDGs .....	11
Mobilizing people to act .....	12
Fostering inclusion in 2030 Agenda through volunteerism .....	13
3.2. Integrating volunteers into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda .....	14
Mainstreaming volunteerism through legislation, policies and in budgetary processes .....	14
Volunteer schemes and technology .....	14
Volunteerism as a means to promote south-south cooperation .....	15
3.3 Measuring the contribution of volunteers .....	16
<b>4. Reimagining volunteerism in Asia and the Pacific .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Notes .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Annexes .....</b>	<b>26</b>

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This is a synthesis report of Member State submissions on integrating volunteerism into the 2030 Agenda in accordance with the 2015 Report of the United Nations Secretary-General (A/70/118) and General Assembly Resolution A/RES/73/140. Information synthesized in this report is based upon Member State National Situation Analyses on volunteering submitted to the Plan of Action Secretariat in 2018, contributions to the 2018 Secretary-General's report on volunteering and Voluntary National Reviews submitted by Member States as part of the process to monitor implementation of the 2030 Agenda. For the ESCAP region, National Situation Analyses were received from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, China, India, Kazakhstan, Nepal, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The report is an input to regional Plan of Action stakeholder consultations as requested by United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/73/140.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Volunteering is a powerful means to engage people to work together to deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and an environmentally sustainable, peaceful world, free of poverty, hunger and inequality where no one is left behind.<sup>1</sup>

From providing medical care to taking climate action, from giving technical assistance to monitoring post-disaster reconstruction, an estimated one billion people volunteer globally.<sup>2</sup> Volunteerism is essential to ensure that global sustainable development efforts are owned by all people, implemented by all and for all.

The 2030 Agenda recognizes the vital roles that volunteers everywhere are playing. Following its launch in 2015, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a Plan of Action developed by United Nations Member States through UNGA

Resolutions (Figure 1) to help volunteering stakeholders enhance the recognition and integration of volunteerism into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through the concerted efforts of volunteers, governments, civil society, the private sector and the United Nations, the Plan of Action seeks to strengthen people's ownership of the 2030 Agenda, integrate and mainstream volunteering into national strategies and policies and better measure the impact of volunteers.

Substantial progress has been made in integrating volunteerism into the SDGs and volunteers not only

**Figure 1** Key United Nations General Assembly resolutions mentioning volunteering.



have a voice at the United Nations,<sup>3</sup> but often in their own countries and organizations. More than 100 countries have now measured volunteer work and over 90 countries have policies or legislation that aim to promote volunteering.<sup>4</sup> In 2018, 29 Member States recognized the efforts of volunteers in their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) on SDG progress.

The Plan of Action will shape the future of volunteering in the context of the 2030 Agenda and a Global Technical Meeting will be held in July 2020 with the theme of 'Reimagining volunteerism for the 2030 Agenda' at the 2020 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. In the build up to this special event, the Plan of Action secretariat is reviewing the role of volunteerism in achieving and localizing the SDGs and creating a knowledge base that is inclusive of good practices, lessons learned and data sets using inputs from Member States, United Nations agencies, volunteer-involving organizations (VIOs), civil society organizations, academia and the private sector. The Plan of Action aims to engage stakeholders to generate evidence and convene dialogues to strengthen and broaden

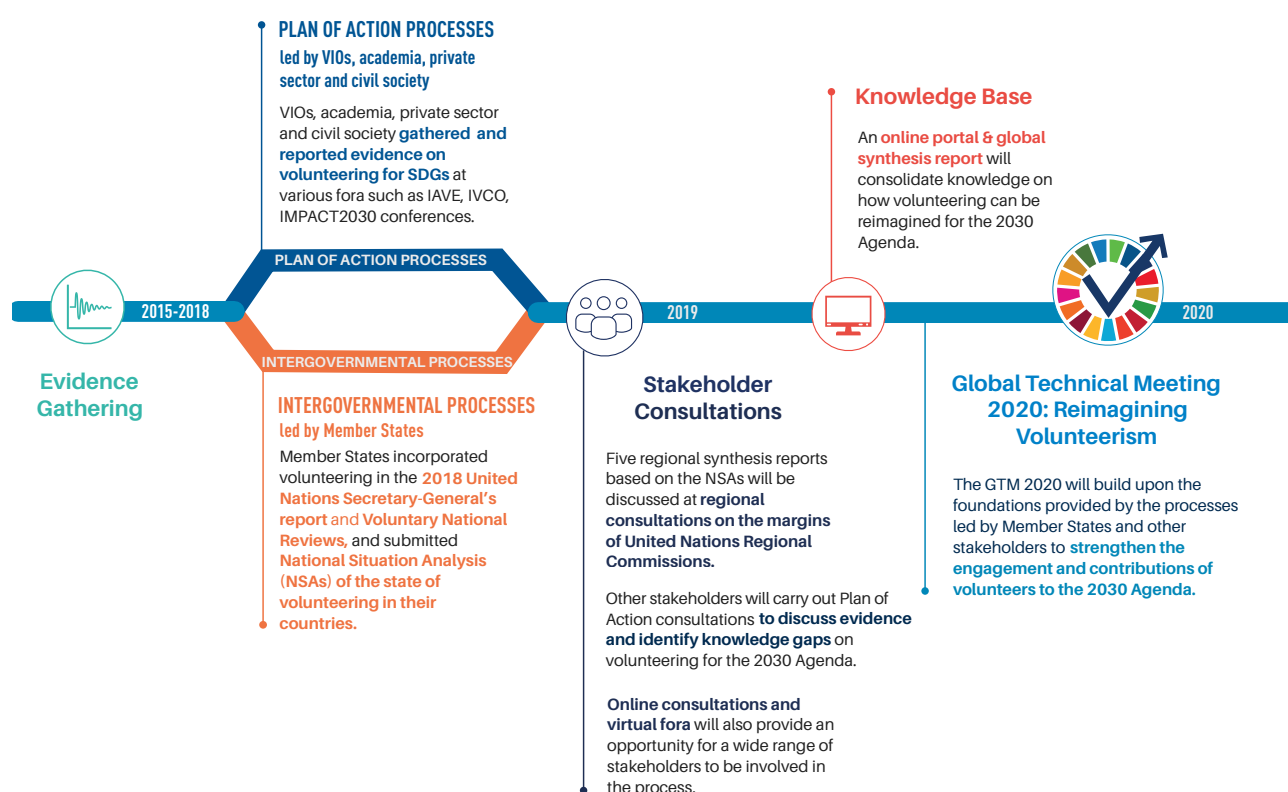
this knowledge base on how volunteerism can be reimagined for the 2030 Agenda.

In 2019, five regional consultations on volunteering will take place in the context of the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development, providing space for Plan of Action stakeholders to discuss evidence and approaches, share best practices and identify areas and opportunities for addressing knowledge gaps. Further civil society-led consultations are envisaged in the second half of 2019 and will be supplemented by online consultations and conversations. Together these dialogues, analyses and best practices will inform a global synthesis report for the 2020 Global Technical Meeting.<sup>i</sup>

The regional synthesis report is a Plan of Action input to the regional consultation on volunteerism held as part of the 2019 Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable

<sup>i</sup> As requested by United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/129, the United Nations Volunteers programme and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies will chair a Global Technical Meeting at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July 2020, with Member States and other stakeholders.

**Figure 2** POA Process: Road to 2020 "Reimagining Volunteerism".



Development convened by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). It draws on information from three sources (refer to Annex A for details). Firstly, it uses information from National Situation Analyses (NSA) on volunteerism that were developed in consultation with the United Nations, civil society and VIOs to generate evidence and data on the scale, scope and impact of volunteerism for the Plan of Action.<sup>ii</sup> Secondly, it uses information on volunteering that was reported by Member States in their VNRs on progress towards the 2030 Agenda. Finally, evidence from recent reports was used, including the 2018 Secretary-General's report on volunteering, global, regional and national level data from Member States and regional bodies and key reports from United Nations agencies and programmes.

This report consists of four chapters. Chapter 2 gives an overview of regional progress made towards the 2030 Agenda to help identify trends and opportunities that volunteerism could help strengthen and accelerate SDG progress. Chapter 3 looks at existing progress on integrating volunteerism into the 2030 Agenda. Chapter 4 brings together the information in Chapters 2 and 3 to provide initial recommendations on actions that volunteering actors in the UNESCAP region can take to achieve the goals of the Plan of Action. These initial recommendations are not exhaustive and will be used as input into further dialogues and consultations on the Plan of Action at the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and in the lead up to the 2020 Global Technical Meeting.

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ii In line with the 2015 Report of the United Nations Secretary-General (A/70/118), United Nations Member States were called upon to contribute a National Situation Analysis on volunteerism in 2018 as part of the implementation of the Plan of Action and to submit these to the United Nations Volunteers programme.

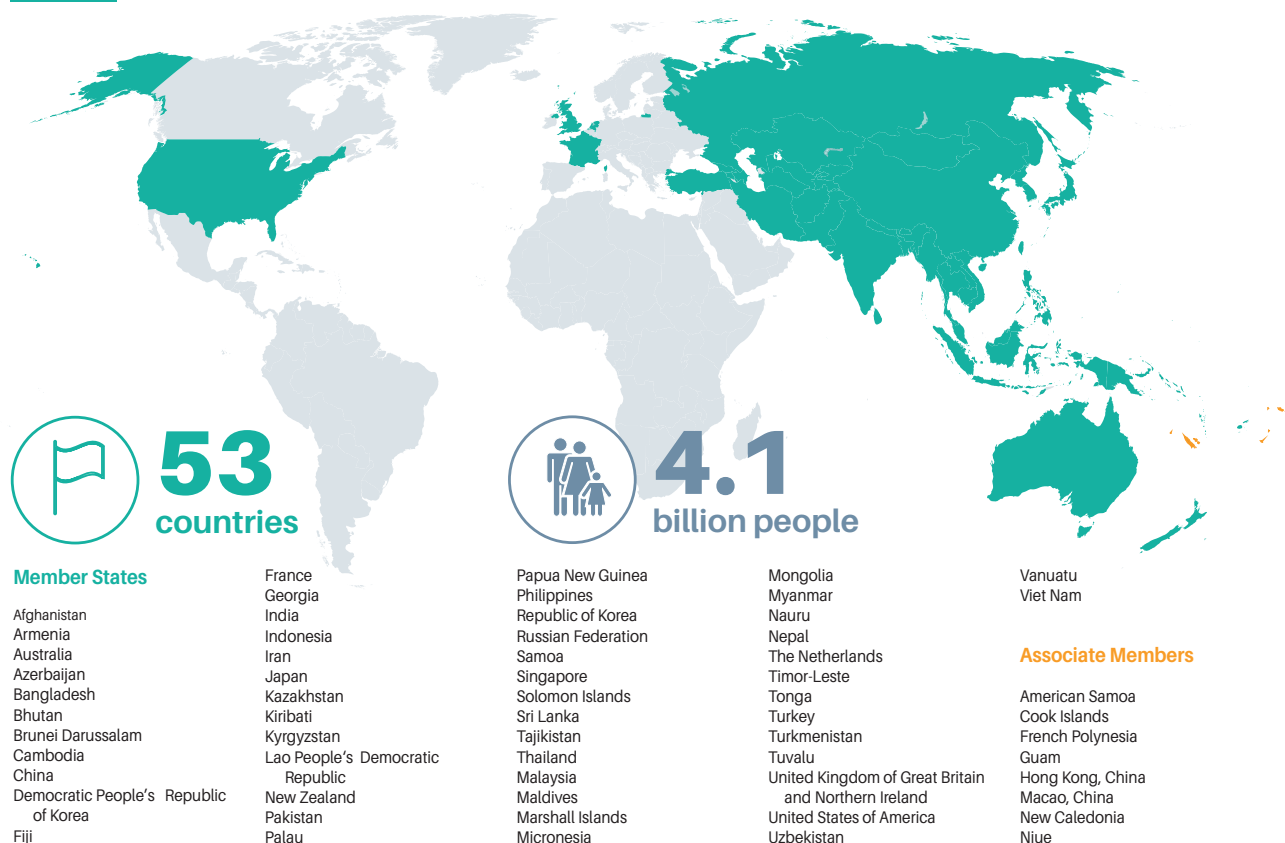
## 2. THE 2030 AGENDA IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

The potential of volunteerism to accelerate the implementation of 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific is unparalleled. The large sizeable population combined with a strong local ethos and culture of volunteering means that millions of people could be mobilized as volunteers to increase people-focused efforts to accelerate the SDGs and to ensure that no one is left behind.

Based on the Voluntary National Reviews, it is becoming clear that Member States are starting to recognize the power of volunteerism as a development modality to advance Agenda 2030.

In the last three years, out of the 29 ESCAP Member States who submitted VNRs,<sup>5</sup> seven mentioned volunteerism in 2018<sup>6</sup>. In their 2018 reviews, Australia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Singapore and

**Figure 3** Map of the UNESCAP region.



Sri Lanka made a direct connection, as advocated through the Plan of Action, by articulating how volunteerism is being integrated into and contributing towards the 2030 Agenda.

To consider how Member States can best integrate volunteerism into SDG policy, programmes and actions that could be reflected in future VNRs, this chapter looks at broad SDG trends across the region focusing on areas in which progress has been made and where work is needed, using existing analysis.

In Asia and the Pacific, current progress in meeting the SDG indicators is mixed, with substantial differences and uneven trajectories across the goals and between and within sub-regions and countries. Insufficient disaggregated data across the 66 SDG indicators<sup>7</sup> hampers accurate analysis, making it difficult to assess how to localize the SDGs and make detailed assessments of how and where the contribution of volunteerism could be maximized.

Over the past five decades, economic development within Asia and the Pacific has been remarkable, with the region accounting for more than 60 percent of world growth.<sup>8</sup> In spite of this progress, based on current trends, a substantial scaling up is required for the Asia and Pacific region to meet 2030 Agenda. Economic growth has not produced equal and inclusive improvements to sustainable development and human development and has not benefited all people either within countries or between countries. The region has made progress on eradicating poverty (SDG 1) and promoting good health and well-being (SDG 3) and is on track to achieve quality education (SDG 4) if current momentum is maintained. Steps taken in the areas of environment, natural resources and climate change have been insufficient to ensure the region is on track to meet the goals of sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), climate action (SDG 13), life below water (SDG 14) and life on land (SDG 15). Although there has been progress in the development of industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9), efforts to promote decent work and inclusive economic growth (SDG 8) have not been successful. Progress has regressed in efforts to tackle inequality (SDG 10) and the promotion of

peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)- both SDGs which cross-cut and impact the ability to make progress in all other SDGs.<sup>9</sup>

In Asia and the Pacific, rising inequalities point to a significant role for volunteerism to play and for volunteerism to be at the centre of policies, investments and actions that focus on ‘leaving no one behind’<sup>10</sup> and ‘reaching the furthest behind first’<sup>11</sup>. The region’s combined income inequality has increased by over five percent<sup>iii</sup> in the last twenty years and grown in 40 percent of all countries, with sharp increases in China, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Singapore.<sup>12</sup> In addition to income and wealth inequalities, substantial horizontal inequalities affect access to basic opportunities, services and resources. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu stand out as particularly unequal with respect to core opportunities.<sup>iv</sup> Marginalized communities are vulnerable to severe and complex shocks to the political, social, economic and ecological systems that underpin human development.<sup>13</sup>

The region has some of the countries with the youngest and oldest populations in the world. The demographic transition in the region involves large numbers of people and the pace of change is more rapid than anywhere else in the world.<sup>14</sup> The region is home to 60 percent of the global population aged between 15-24 years. Based solely on population proportions, around 85 million youth in the region are living in extreme poverty. Adolescent fertility rates are among the highest in the world along with high use and abuse of illicit substances, drugs and alcohol. Youth in the region are often trained for skills not matched by labour demands and a large share of employed youth have no job or wage security. Youth face obstacles in accessing land, credit and new technologies compared to their older peers.<sup>15</sup>

iii Measured by the Gini coefficient.

iv Core opportunities are: electricity, clean fuel, bank account, clean water, basic sanitation, non-stunting, modern contraception, secondary education, higher education, full-time employment, lower inequality.

In the coming decades, the region's population will also age significantly with the proportion of older people expected to double by 2050. The old-age dependency ratio is expected to be the highest in Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand.<sup>v 16</sup> This could lead to rising economic inequality and raises concerns about a country's capacity to sustain economic growth, maintain fiscal sustainability and increase general welfare for all ages. Due to low pension coverage and low benefit levels, older persons in the region are often engaged in vulnerable employment, similar to young people, that are hazardous, insecure, low paid and with no social protection.<sup>17</sup>

Women and girls in the region face unequal opportunities and have not benefited similar to men from the decades of economic growth. Women and girls also face unacceptable levels of violence in many countries, including sexual violence. Child marriage remains high in areas of South Asia, for example in Bangladesh, 52 percent of women aged 20–24 years in 2013 had married before they were 18 years old.<sup>18</sup> Rates of intimate partner violence, usually perpetrated by men against women, are high across the entire region but are at a particularly critical level in some areas of South Asia. Meanwhile, robust, comparable data on violence against women for the region is lacking, due to the challenges of underreporting.

Asia and the Pacific are more exposed to the impacts of climate change than other world regions – six out of 10 countries most affected by climate

change between 1996 and 2015 are in Asia and the Pacific. Natural disasters in the region have killed two million people since 1970, with an average of 43,000 people killed annually.<sup>19</sup> The relative impact of economic losses from disasters is higher in poor countries compared to rich ones. Volunteers can play a role in mitigating the effects of climate change. The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 acknowledges volunteers and community-based organizations as vital stakeholders in supporting disaster risk reduction, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 calls for a more people-centred approach to disaster risk reduction and for governments to engage with volunteers and marginalized groups in the design and implementation of policies and plans.<sup>20</sup> As more countries in the region industrialize and as populations grow, greater pressure will be placed on natural resources, such as water, energy, land and forests, while pollution, degradation of the natural environment and natural disasters will increase.<sup>21</sup> Rapid industrialization, urbanization and vehicle ownership has also resulted in high levels of air pollution in the region. Developing countries in the region, in particular Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Lao PDR, and Pakistan, account for around 96 percent of the region's annual productivity loss caused by pollution. Of pollution-related deaths, 92 percent occur in low- or middle-income countries, further signifying the inequality that exists among countries. Natural resource degradation also has unequal impact, e.g. for rural households that rely on income derived from forests and agricultural land. Competition over available scarce natural resources holds the risk of leading to, intensifying or sustaining violent conflict in the region.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>v</sup> The old-age dependency ratio is the number of persons 65 and older as a proportion of the working-age population of 15-64 years.



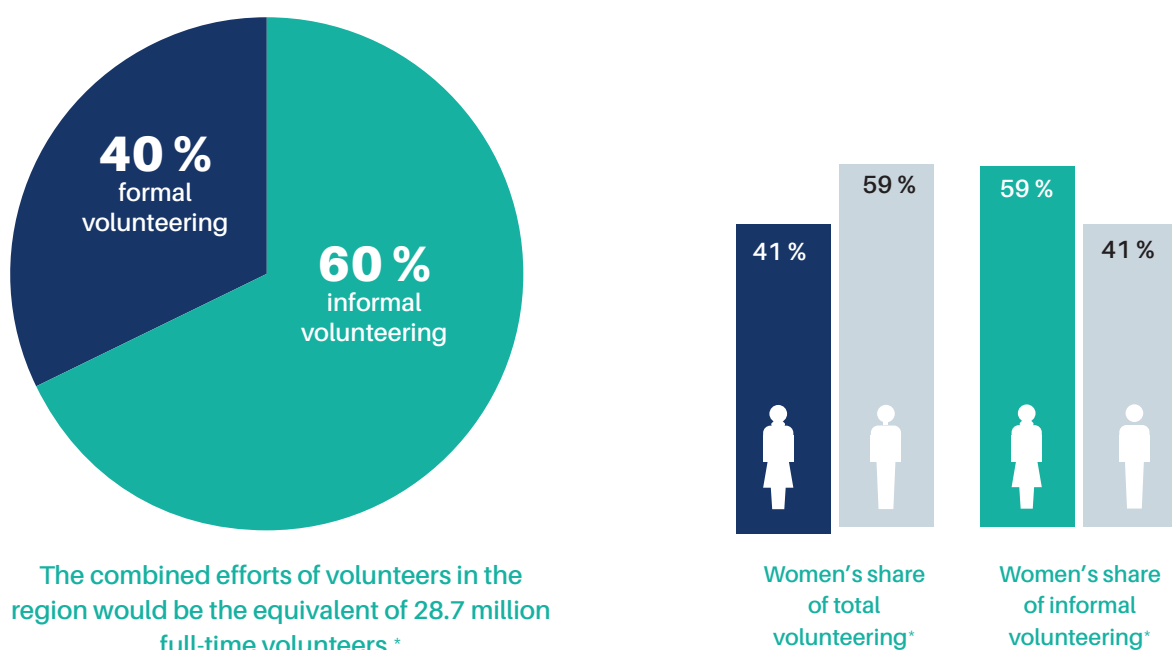
### 3. KEY TRENDS IN VOLUNTEERING IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Volunteerism is an important means to build progress in achieving the 2030 Agenda and to address some of the development challenges outlined in Chapter 2. According to estimates in the 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report, the combined efforts of volunteers in the region would be the equivalent to 28.7 million full-time volunteers.

Over sixty percent of volunteering in the region happens informally, between people in their own communities and networks, giving Asia one of the highest proportions of formal volunteering through organizations and associations in comparison with global estimates. The Asia-Pacific is the only region where men take on a slightly higher proportion of volunteer work overall (51 to 49 percent),

although interestingly the balance is reversed when only informal volunteering is taken into account: regionally, women are responsible for 51 percent of informal volunteering, which tends to be lower status and less well supported.<sup>23</sup> While estimates of the scale and scope of volunteering in the region are useful, it is difficult to summarize regional trends due to variable quality and coverage of the data.

**Figure 4** Scale and scope of volunteering in the ESCAP region.



\* Estimates derived from data from the 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report.

Across Asia and the Pacific, significant differences exist in the way volunteerism is defined and understood. Volunteerism and its values are derived from and ingrained in local cultures and religious beliefs. For example, in Cambodia volunteerism is considered “the glue strengthening community unity” and an important contributor to peace and development.<sup>24</sup> In Sri Lanka, traditional Buddhist norms, such as *Vesak* and *Poson Dansala*, promote volunteerism, including through the distribution of alms.<sup>25</sup> In China, the concept of volunteerism is promoted by values that include the Confucian concept of benevolence, the Buddhist concepts of compassion and giving back and the Taoist concepts of morality and helping others.<sup>26</sup> In Thailand, volunteerism is deeply rooted in the communities as a way of promoting generosity and is manifested through local actions to help solve social issues.<sup>27</sup>

Across the region, the ways that people volunteer are continually evolving. Informal volunteering in communities continues to be the most common form of volunteering.<sup>28</sup> Formal volunteering is growing and becoming increasingly prevalent, with volunteers being organized through both national government schemes, such as the China Volunteer Service Federation and India’s National Service Scheme and *Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan*, as well as by registered organizations and networks, such as the Thai Red Cross or the Afghan Red Crescent Societies. In some countries, such as Thailand, thousands of volunteers are registered with various government agencies, performing functions like

monitoring and preventing forest fires, traffic wardens and protection of art and local heritage.<sup>29</sup> The use of international volunteering to promote international cooperation and knowledge sharing, especially through south-south volunteering is a growing phenomenon, especially in China. As technology continues to advance, innovations in volunteering in Asia and the Pacific are likely to bring further changes, creating both opportunities and challenges, different actors and partnerships. For example, China’s National Volunteer Service Information System provides recruitment, certification and data analysis services to more than 97 million individual volunteers with its simple and accessible IT gateways.<sup>30</sup>

In moving forward to the Global Technical Meeting in 2020, concerted efforts should be made by Plan of Action stakeholders in the region to collect further evidence on volunteering trends, including informal volunteerism, the role of the private sector and other actors. Although, the information received from Member States for this synthesis report placed emphasis on national volunteer schemes, the fact that most volunteering is informal means that further evidence and analysis is required on the interface between formal and informal volunteering for Agenda 2030. The consultations will provide a platform for Member States and Plan of Action actors to consider wider evidence and emerging volunteering trends in the region.

### 3.1. STRENGTHENING PEOPLE'S OWNERSHIP OF THE SDGs

Ownership, participation and partnerships are key principles at the core of localizing and achieving 2030 Agenda. Volunteers strengthen people's ownership of the development agenda by disseminating information on the 2030 Agenda, empowering and enabling citizen voices and collecting data to monitor SDG progress agendas. Volunteerism has the potential to empower people to play a role in the development of their own communities, enabling them to play a role in solving problems and co-creating solutions. Ownership can also be fostered through stronger partnerships between formal and informal volunteers and between the Plan of Action stakeholders, Member States, the private sector, volunteer-involving organizations, civil society and academia.

#### IMPLEMENTING A PEOPLE-CENTRED APPROACH TO THE SDGs

In Asia and the Pacific, volunteers play a key role in national development efforts, complementing the work of public sector workers and civil servants by providing and supplementing essential basic services. The Government of India runs volunteer schemes under the auspices of relevant line ministries to support key services, including health and sanitation, education, justice and the prevention of wildlife crime. For example, the *Bharat Nirman* Volunteers, implemented by the Indian Ministry of Rural Development, uses volunteers to educate and share information with rural and hard-to-reach households on their rights and entitlements to government benefits and programmes.<sup>31</sup>

In Thailand, volunteers are supporting public officials and community members to implement the state-funded *Thai Niyom Yanguen* programme that facilitates communities to identify priority development interventions and then funds these community-driven development initiatives.<sup>32</sup> In

Kazakhstan, health-for-all is promoted through doctors of the National Research Cardiac Surgery Center, who volunteer by treating patients in severe need of surgeries at no cost.<sup>33</sup>

Volunteers are playing a role in disaster risk reduction, in creating national and community-level resilience mechanisms as a response to climate change and in responding to natural disasters. In Thailand, the Community-Based Disaster Risk Management programme is designed to create community warning and evacuation systems.<sup>34</sup> In Sri Lanka, volunteers in Disaster Risk Reduction provide direct assistance when disasters occur.<sup>35</sup> In India, *Namami Gange* (National Mission for Clean Ganga) was launched in June 2016 to reduce pollution and to rejuvenate and improve conservation of the Ganges River.<sup>36</sup> In Myanmar, volunteers are an integral part of the Myanmar Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction.<sup>37</sup>

Formal and informal volunteerism is also an effective means to drive changes in attitudes and behaviour in relation to the environment programme 'Let's change each paper for a leaf' mobilizes volunteers to protect trees through promoting the reduction of paper waste and recycling.<sup>38</sup> In Nepal, 10,600 youth volunteers were mobilized in the devastating earthquake affected areas for rescue, relief and rehabilitation work.<sup>39</sup>

In Asia and the Pacific, volunteers are also making efforts to improve peace, reconciliation and justice. In India, the *Nyaya Mitra* scheme was established under the Department of Justice in 2017. The scheme uses volunteer retired judges and legal officers to identify litigants and reduce the number of legal cases awaiting settlement through the provision of legal advice and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.<sup>40</sup> In Thailand, 'probation volunteers' under the Ministry of Justice, follow-up, supervise and help in the rehabilitation of former offenders.<sup>41</sup>

Across the region, Member States incentivize, recognize and reward volunteers for their contributions to society. In China, national-level awards include the 'Four (Hundred) Ones' commendation, which recognizes 100 volunteers,

100 volunteer organizations, 100 volunteer projects and 100 outstanding representatives of community volunteer services nationwide.<sup>42</sup> India promotes multiple awards, including the annual National Youth Awards, which gives Indian rupees 40,000 (approximately US\$ 560) to those selected, and the Academic Credit for Higher Studies, through which volunteers with 120 hours of service receive academic credits.<sup>43</sup> In Thailand, outstanding volunteers registered with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security are recognized annually on two dates: October 21, Thai Social Work and Volunteer Day; and March 22, Public Disaster Relief Volunteer Day. Some volunteers in Thailand also get medical benefits, personal accident insurance and public transport fee deduction.<sup>44</sup>

To further incentivize volunteerism, efforts are underway by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in Cambodia with the support of UNV to develop more formal accreditation to help recognize volunteers. This accreditation is especially important for young people as it is perceived to provide an advantage when looking for a job.<sup>45</sup> In Sri Lanka, the V-Awards is a national institutionalized effort to recognize volunteers as “silent heroes,” with the award ceremony culminating with a prime time television show viewed by millions of people.<sup>46</sup> In Kazakhstan, a national awareness-raising project called Generous Heart encourages citizens, business and civil society organizations to participate in volunteer activities.<sup>47</sup> In the Russian Federation, 2018 was declared the ‘Year of the Volunteer’ leading to increasing public recognition of volunteers and establishment of new volunteering infrastructure, such as the creation of 178 volunteer centres.<sup>48</sup>

## MOBILIZING PEOPLE TO ACT

In Asia and the Pacific, both formal and informal volunteers raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda including through local campaigns, in remote areas and with hard to reach groups. The government of Afghanistan has organized a number of awareness-raising sessions in communities around SDGs with the aim of transforming the participants into

volunteers who can scale up government efforts to inform communities of the SDGs and the potential of volunteers to engage in their achievement.<sup>49</sup> In Sri Lanka, several projects are being implemented under the guidance of the Presidential Secretariat that aim to create awareness about the SDGs by volunteers.<sup>50</sup> In Cambodia, volunteers raise awareness on hygiene in rural areas to help promote clean water and sanitation, the rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans-sexual people and peaceful coexistence to support peace, justice and strong institutions.<sup>51</sup> In India, the *Swacch Bharat Abhiyan* initiative helps accelerate efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage, engaging volunteers as ‘foot soldiers’ to promote changes in solid and liquid waste management at the community level.<sup>52</sup> Under the #KnowYourGoals campaign of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network Youth Initiative, in Russia and Turkey, youth groups and student associations promote community ownership of the SDGs through lectures and events on campuses and in their communities.<sup>53</sup>

Volunteers play a key role in raising awareness of gender equality and the need to eliminate violence against women. In Afghanistan, young Afghan men and women spread gender-equality messages through Youth-Mullah Gender Volunteer Caravans.<sup>54</sup> In India, the *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* scheme engages volunteers, primarily women, in raising awareness on the importance of girls’ education, improving the ratio of girls to boys in schools.<sup>55</sup> Volunteers also raise their own awareness through volunteering, such as in Armenia where the Armenian Red Cross Society and the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees train young volunteers on gender equality and gender-based violence.

In Sri Lanka, on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence in 2016, 100 volunteers gathered and hung posters to increase awareness about individual and collective responsibility to report sexual harassment in public spaces.<sup>56</sup> In India, the Mahila Police Volunteers are helping to reduce violence against women through awareness raising and facilitation of reporting crimes against women.

The volunteer scheme also has the potential to foster women's leadership and empowerment at the local level.<sup>57</sup> UN Volunteers in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Vietnam from 2015-2017 worked with local communities to raise awareness of violence against women and contributed to changing attitudes and gender norms as part of Partners for Prevention, a United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, UN Women and United Nations Volunteers joint regional programme.<sup>58</sup> In Nepal, the Ministry of Health and Population is leading the Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHV) program since 1988. 51,470 FCHVs have been working for primary health care activities by bridging the health service delivery efforts between governments and communities. This program has shown encouraging results in improving maternal and child health over the past decades in Nepal.<sup>59</sup>

## FOSTERING INCLUSION IN 2030 AGENDA THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteerism can be an effective policy response to help promote social inclusion and to tackle some of the demographic challenges in Asia and the Pacific. Volunteers can support development efforts in hard to reach communities and people from socially marginalized groups can become volunteers and actively participate in development efforts both within and outside their communities. In Pakistan, the Sindh Agricultural and Forestry Workers Coordinating Organization trains community volunteer activists who promote the inclusion of marginalized people in improving rural socioeconomic conditions.<sup>60</sup> In the Philippines, the Deaf Student Community Service engages in activities that foster responsible citizenship and strengthen understanding between the institution and the communities where the deaf students live.<sup>61</sup>

Senior volunteers are involved in numerous initiatives in the region that contribute to 2030 Agenda. Their community and social work benefit society, as well as keep them active and healthy. In Vietnam, UNFPA has piloted an inter-generational self-help club model

for persons over the age of 65 who provide home care and support for other more vulnerable older people.<sup>62</sup> In Thailand, volunteers are supporting the elderly through assisting them in day-to-day activities and contributing to improving their quality of life.<sup>63</sup> In Azerbaijan, an Elderly Volunteers project under the slogan "Volunteering has no age" involves the elderly living in social service facilities to be responsible for registering and supervising children in playgrounds.<sup>64</sup>

Volunteering provides a mechanism through which young men and women can develop soft skills, such as time management, and adapting to an organizational culture, which can increase their chances of entering formal employment and access to decent work.<sup>65</sup>

In Sri Lanka, volunteering is recognized as a way to equip high school and tertiary education students with relevant skills for the job market.<sup>66</sup> In Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijani Service and Assessment Network (ASAN) launched a website in 2015 to link young people, especially ASAN volunteers, with experienced persons in public and private entities. So far, 1,000 young ASAN volunteers have found employment in government entities and private companies, with 712 of them having gained this employment through the website.<sup>67</sup>

## 3.2. INTEGRATING VOLUNTEERS INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA

A growing number of Member States in Asia and the Pacific are producing legislation, policies and institutional mechanisms to create an enabling environment for volunteers and volunteer-involving organizations to contribute to national development goals. Volunteerism is also playing an integral role in tackling some of the 'big issues' across the region, including different types of inequality, youth unemployment, climate change, climate-related disasters and environmental degradation.

### MAINSTREAMING VOLUNTEERISM THROUGH LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND IN BUDGETARY PROCESSES

Eleven countries in the Asia-Pacific region introduced or updated policies, legislation or other measures specific or relevant to volunteering in the decade leading up to 2018.<sup>68</sup> These included China's new regulations on volunteer services that were implemented nationwide on 1 December 2017 to support and encourage volunteer service. The government of Sri Lanka's draft volunteerism policy is pending cabinet approval. While, in Afghanistan, a draft law on volunteerism is under government consultation and consideration.<sup>69</sup>

In the Asia-Pacific region, volunteerism has largely been mainstreamed into sector youth policies rather than National Development Strategies. The exception is in India's 12th Five Year Development Plan where the spirit of volunteerism is mentioned in the context of youth.<sup>70</sup> In Cambodia, the National Youth Development Policy promotes volunteerism as a key strategy.<sup>71</sup> In Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, volunteerism is mainstreamed in the national youth policies.<sup>72</sup> India developed a Youth Policy in 2014 which encourages young people to participate in community-based and other development activities, while developing qualities of good

citizenship and community service in youth was a key recommendation of India's 2012-17 Development Plan.<sup>73</sup> In Nepal, Education System Plan introduced the National Development Service program through which post-graduate students are encouraged to volunteer and learn about rural areas.<sup>74</sup> Finally, regional intergovernmental bodies like the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) "encourage volunteerism among ASEAN Member States to strengthen the ASEAN Community."<sup>75</sup>

The lack of a specific budget for volunteering was reported as a key challenge by many countries, including by Cambodia, Nepal and Afghanistan.<sup>76</sup> China requires local government entities above the county level to incorporate volunteer service into economic and social development plans and arrange funding accordingly. It also has volunteer service foundations in each province that are funded by the national government.<sup>77</sup> Thailand has a dedicated budget to promote volunteerism at national and sub-national levels approved by the country's Budget Bureau.<sup>78</sup>

### VOLUNTEER SCHEMES AND TECHNOLOGY

Many countries in the Asia-Pacific region have national volunteer schemes. In Azerbaijan, China and India, national schemes mobilize and support volunteers, set priorities for voluntary action and mobilize resources for voluntary action.<sup>79</sup> For example, in India 15 different schemes are in operation, with the *Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan* scheme alone engaging almost 3.6 million volunteers<sup>80</sup> and a total of 14 million people involved across all the schemes. In Kazakhstan, the National Volunteer Network includes registered businesses that promote volunteer and community services, especially among young people.<sup>81</sup>

In Georgia, the Volunteer of Georgia programme creates a unified network of volunteers, harnesses volunteerism for citizenship awareness-raising and increases the number of young people interested in volunteerism. The initiative includes charity and social activities, setting up volunteer clubs, engaging in environmental activities, promoting a healthy lifestyle,



tolerance, human rights, social integration of young people with disabilities, etc. The programme has 404 volunteers and is implemented in 64 municipalities in 10 regions of Georgia and in the capital Tbilisi. Between 2015 and 2017, 1,435 activities were carried out, with the engagement of 15,000 young people.<sup>82</sup> In Afghanistan, the Afghan Red Crescent Society has an estimated 46,000 volunteers nationally who motivate locals to take part in humanitarian action and distribute relief materials to vulnerable people in remote areas, among other activities.<sup>83</sup>

In some Asia-Pacific countries, online systems are in place for storing and sharing information on volunteers. In India, individual volunteer organizations are required to register new members and a central profile of volunteers registered with governmental institutions is maintained. In Kazakhstan, an online portal and a mobile application was due to be launched in November 2018 with the purpose of unifying information on national volunteers and simplifying the registration process.<sup>84</sup> In China, information about volunteers is gathered and synthesized through a national integrated online volunteer information management system accessible to computers and mobile phones, which covers 15 provinces and includes data on more than 97 million individual volunteers.<sup>85</sup> Although it is home to several large volunteer schemes, India has no organized, structured mechanism to capture overall data for volunteers from across sectors and different states. However, a system is in place to record the number of young people mobilized as part of a government initiative.<sup>86</sup>

provide humanitarian and medical assistance and teach Chinese as a foreign language in over 22 developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.<sup>87</sup> In 2016 and 2017, the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation deployed international volunteers to Myanmar and Nepal through a South-South initiative. Volunteerism has been identified as an important component of the people-to-people pillar of China's Belt and Road Initiative.<sup>88</sup>

South-South cooperation is changing and evolving with the engagement of businesses in volunteer programmes, city-to-city exchanges, online volunteering as well as the expansion of youth volunteer programmes. Furthermore, new volunteer partnerships and research platforms are making volunteering from the south more visible, better governed and better organized than ever before.<sup>89</sup>

In collaboration with the Thai-Myanmar Alliance for Volunteerism, on 23 January 2016, the Thai Embassy organized a Big Cleaning Day activity at Nga Pyaw Gyun village in Myanmar. Volunteers from both countries met with the village committee to discuss its sustainable development plan, worked with local teachers and children to clean village schools and set up a mobile dental clinic for the village.<sup>90</sup> The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport in Cambodia and the Ministry of Youth in Malaysia have agreed to facilitate the exchange of volunteers working on education and drinking water, sanitation and hygiene projects.<sup>91</sup>

## VOLUNTEERISM AS A MEANS TO PROMOTE SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

South-South volunteering is used by Member States in the region to promote knowledge exchanges, youth volunteer exchanges and international volunteer networks, often as part of national development policies. Volunteerism is integral to China's overseas development policy, and volunteers (usually young people) as well as paid professionals are sent to support infrastructural development,

### 3.3 MEASURING THE CONTRIBUTION OF VOLUNTEERS

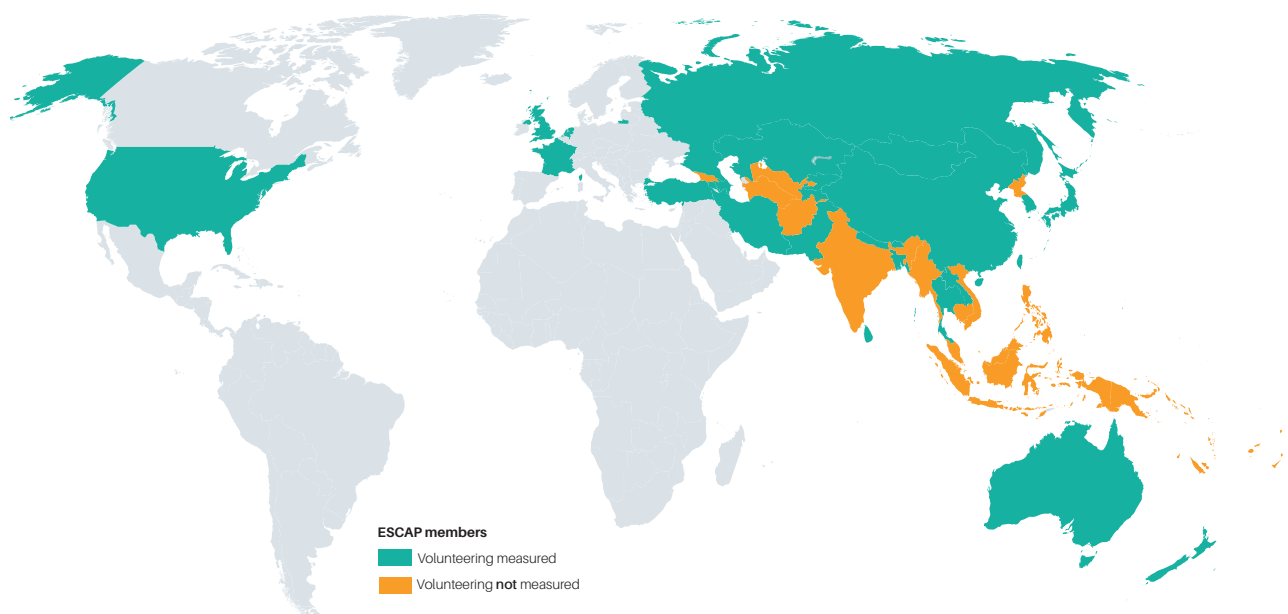
Across the Asia- and the Pacific, countries are measuring volunteerism through both official statistics and through the efforts of national agencies, academia and/ or volunteer-involving organizations who either add up and calculate the number of volunteers in different volunteer schemes or conduct surveys.

In Thailand, approximately eight million volunteers were registered in government agencies alone.<sup>92</sup> In India, the two largest government schemes are reported to have more than 3.6 million volunteers.<sup>93</sup> In Sri Lanka, the National Volunteering Secretariat conducted a National Survey on Volunteerism in 2014, in collaboration with UNV, based on a sample of approximately 15,000 volunteers aged 15 years and above.<sup>94</sup> Afghanistan reported that the Central

Statistic Organization will conduct surveys in future as volunteerism has been identified as a key priority for the 2030 Agenda.<sup>95</sup>

Measurement is important to demonstrate impact, monitor contributions to the SDGs and ultimately make the case for increased investments of time and money in volunteering. The International Labour Organization (ILO) *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* (2011) provides a model that some countries have taken as the basis for the development of national surveys.<sup>96</sup> And in 2013, the International Conference of Labour Statistics recognized and defined volunteer work, allowing for comparable and regular collection of data on volunteering as part of established labour force measurement. Measuring volunteering using the ILO methodology through official statistics, not only provides a rigorous method for cross-country analysis, it also allows for the inclusion and measurement of informal volunteers, a large and powerful group which are pivotal to 2030

**Figure 5** Geographical distribution of ESCAP countries by experience in measuring volunteer work, 2008-2017





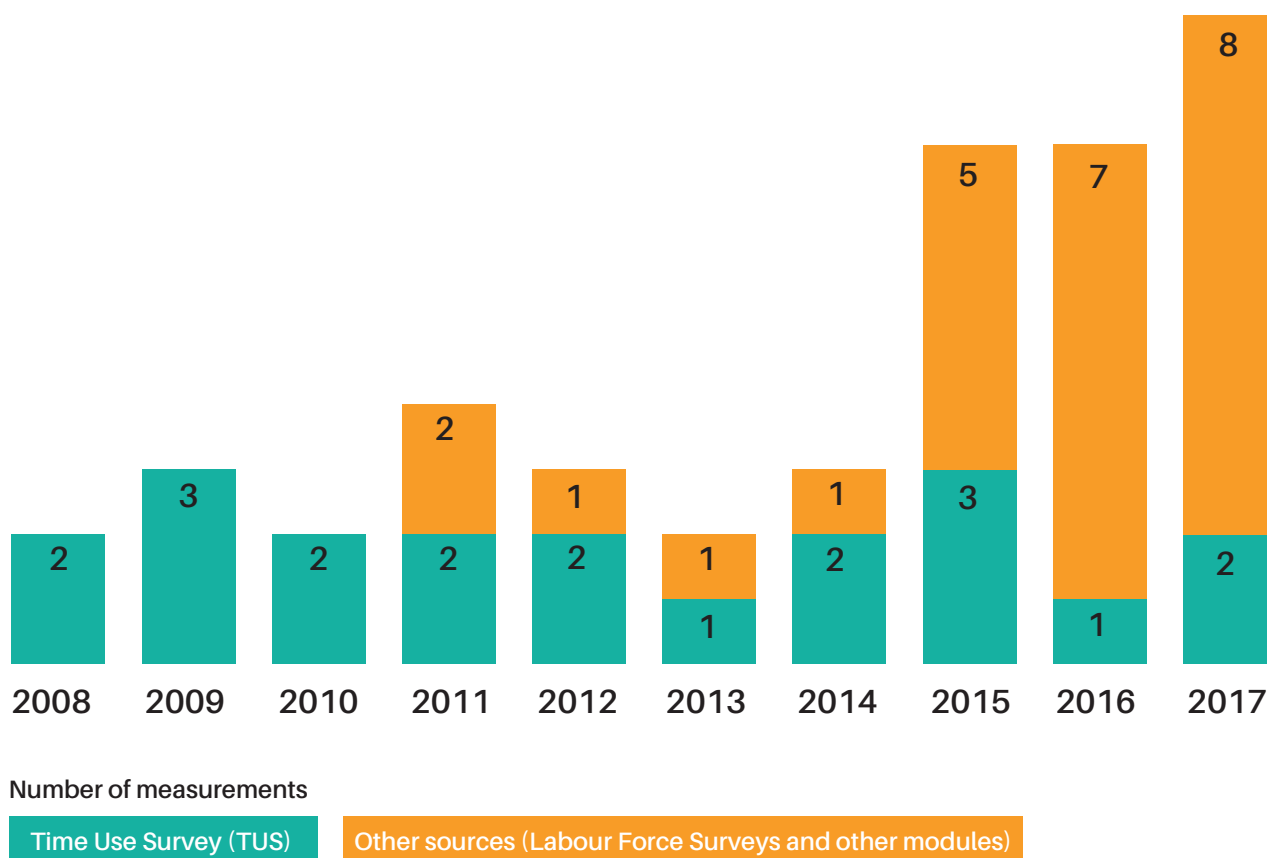
Agenda in the Asia and the Pacific. Measurements that focus on counting formal volunteers exclude this important group and can undermine the extent and force of volunteerism.

Member States measure volunteering using national statistics through Time Use Surveys, value surveys and household surveys. The ILO estimates that between 2007 and 2017, 103 United Nations Member States collected data on volunteering using these methods. In the ESCAP region, 27 out of 53 countries have measured volunteer work in official statistics at least once between 2007 and 2017 and the data covers 54 percent of the population in the region. 46 measurements were made during this period in the ESCAP region, with the number of measurements made by countries increasing significantly after 2014. India and Indonesia have not measured volunteer work. As the second and third most populated countries in the world, if they were to produce official estimates, the data coverage would

increase to 75 percent of the region's population. India is already working on producing national estimates of volunteer work through Time Use Surveys and a module attached to the Labour Force Survey. Indonesia is also exploring the capacity to measure volunteer work through the national Labour Force Survey.<sup>97</sup>

In the ESCAP region, the main data sources used for measurement were time-use surveys, labour force surveys and general social surveys. Until 2014, the main data sources on volunteer work were time-use surveys, which captured the time spent on all activities performed by a person during 24 hours. After 2014, the collection of data using specially-designed modules and questions attached to different surveys to measure volunteer work became a more usual practice. This change in approach may have been influenced by the results of the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, which established the international

**Figure 6** Number of measurements of volunteer work in the ESCAP region, by type of data source, 2008-2017



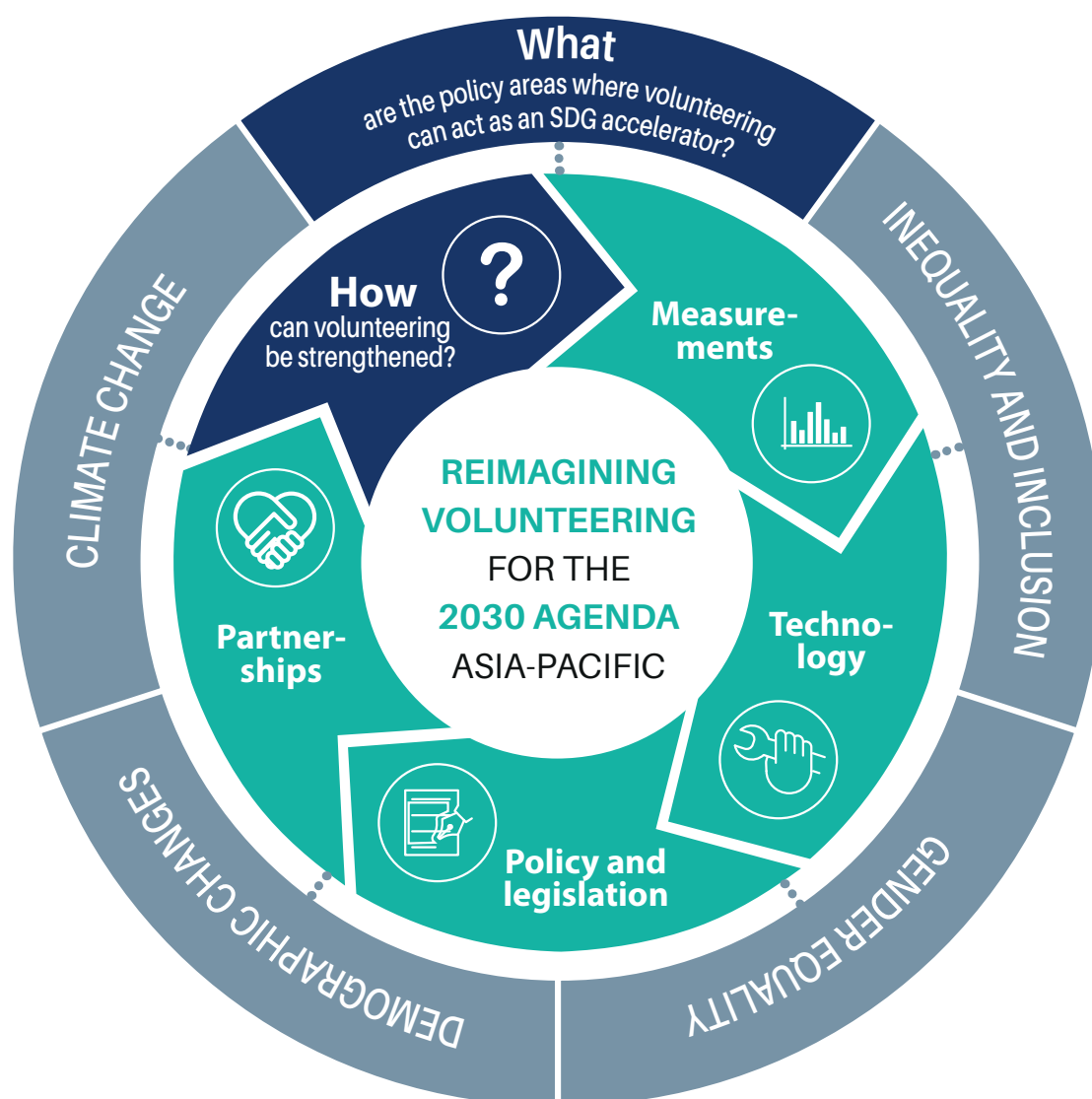
statistical definition of volunteer work and highlighted the importance of measuring it using the ILO recommendations offered in the *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* (2011).<sup>98</sup>

About 52 percent of the ESCAP countries measuring volunteer work used only one source (time-use surveys, labour force surveys, general social surveys, census or other), while 37 percent used two different sources and 11 percent used three or more. For example, Bangladesh used the Labour Force Survey and the Survey on Volunteering. Around 62 percent of data sources used for measurements captured both forms of volunteer work: through organizations (formal volunteering) and on own initiative (informal volunteering).

## 4. REIMAGINING VOLUNTEERISM IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

In Asia and the Pacific, volunteerism is contributing to sustainable development and the achievement of 2030 Agenda, through both the actions of informal volunteers and those participating in formal volunteer schemes. As reflected in the Voluntary National Review processes, volunteers are partners for both the implementation and localization of 2030 Agenda.

Figure 7 Reimagining volunteering for the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific.



With increasing income disparity and horizontal inequalities, weak social protection systems and growing environmental hazards, volunteerism is manifesting itself as a cost-effective modality to deliver and monitor the delivery of frontline services, such as water and sanitation, to the poor. Furthermore, through the development of volunteer infrastructure, like national volunteer schemes, countries are empowering volunteers to help extend the geographical reach of national development programmes and policies to marginalized populations and those left furthest behind.

However, the urgent need to scale up efforts to achieve the SDGs in the Asia-Pacific region, in combination with the large population and increasing inequality, means that volunteerism still remains a largely untapped development resource with huge potential to help the acceleration of the SDGs and the achievement of a people-centric and socially-inclusive 2030 Agenda. To realize this potential, and to ensure that volunteerism is 'reimagined for the 2030 Agenda', strategies are required to ensure that volunteerism is an integral component of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of 2030 Agenda in all of its policies, programmes and actions.

Through the evidence gathered for this report, some preliminary recommendations have emerged that will need to be further discussed and debated in the lead up to the Global Technical Meeting in 2020. These recommendations need to be backed up and supplemented by further evidence from countries in Asia and especially the Pacific. The recommendations serve as an input to inform conversations during the 2019 Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. They are separated into three areas: 1) the role of volunteerism in improving data availability for 2030 Agenda in the region; 2) measures which can be taken to make volunteerism more effective as a modality and mechanism to help achieve the SDGs; and 3) examining key 2030 Agenda policy areas through which policymakers and Plan of Action stakeholders can prioritize volunteers as powerful SDG accelerators. These include inequality, demographic changes, gender and climate change.

**Volunteers can play a role in the 'data revolution' by extending and improving the collection of disaggregated data on SDG indicators in the Asia and Pacific region.** With training from national statistical agencies and other relevant government bodies, volunteers can become key agents in the collection of data, especially for SDG indicators where data is scarce due to difficulties in accessing hard to reach geographical areas and communities. With improved data, Member States can better tailor policies, programmes and actions to scale up SDG engagement, including localizing the SDGs and considering how to better utilize volunteerism to deliver 2030 Agenda. In countries with volunteer infrastructures already in place, such as formal national schemes, volunteerism could be a quick way to improve data collection as volunteers could potentially be mobilized rapidly and on a large scale, starting at the community level.

**Further research, evidence and quantitative data is required to inform policy options on how volunteerism can assist efforts to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.** Stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region should identify areas in which further evidence is required, such as informal volunteerism, the role of the private sector and geographical areas where evidence is weak, such as the Pacific. Plan of Action stakeholders, particularly academia, should invest resources in researching and gathering data on the comparable advantages of volunteerism *vis-à-vis* other policy options and in gathering quantitative data that measures the scale of volunteerism and its impact. Data should be disaggregated by gender, age, disability and other intersectional indicators and the contributions of informal volunteers and marginalized groups need to be better captured to strengthen the evidence base and broaden policy discourse. When possible, Member States should make better use of existing data from national statistical agencies in their VNRs, including high-quality data on measurement of volunteer work, which should be collected using existing ILO methodologies.

To leverage its full potential, **volunteerism needs to be mainstreamed into national development strategies and other key sector policies.** The fact that volunteerism-focused legislation often takes the form of youth policies and programming creates an opportunity to promote youth empowerment, but it also poses a challenge. By only highlighting volunteerism as part of youth policies, Member States in the Asia and Pacific region are missing an opportunity to consider how volunteerism can contribute to the inter-connectedness of 2030 Agenda and the full range of SDGs and sector policies. When incorporating volunteerism into mainstream strategies, analysis and consideration should be given to the type of volunteers required and how they can contribute to maximize impact of key sector policies, through, for example, awareness raising and information dissemination, the transfer and use of expert technical skills, etc. In particular, consideration should be given to how to maximize the skills of older volunteers as a key stakeholder group in the Asia and Pacific region.

**It is vital for all Member States to build an enabling policy environment for volunteerism which is appropriate to the local context and respects local norms.** A number of countries in the region have government-supported volunteer schemes, with the Indian schemes being among the largest in the world. When numerous formal volunteering schemes exist in a single country, coordination mechanisms are often lacking, with volunteers expected to register in multiple systems. Volunteer schemes and programmes are often focused on a specific age group, especially youth. When new formal volunteer schemes are developed, measures should be put in place to ensure the schemes are open and accessible to all people, including youth, older people, persons with disabilities and people from hard to reach communities. At the same time, informal volunteering is on the rise in the region. The diversity of volunteering environments across the Asia and Pacific region mean that no one size will fit all. The strength of informal volunteering combined with nascent but strong government schemes mean that laws and regulations need to create a conducive and open environment for formal and informal volunteers

through which they are empowered, and their safety and well-being is protected. An enabling environment is also needed, through which volunteering modalities create multi-stakeholder partnerships to improve coordination, efficiency and ultimately impact, and through which volunteerism can become inclusive and accessible by all and to all.

**Volunteering is a powerful connector and vehicle for south-south cooperation and partnerships in the context of 2030 Agenda.** With increasing regional economic cooperation across ASEAN and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries and the China Belt and Road Initiative, Plan of Action stakeholders are looking at volunteerism as a way to connect people and build localized knowledge on development issues. Knowledge sharing on 2030 Agenda within and between countries is essential to allow innovative ideas to be shared, effective processes and mechanisms to be adapted or scaled up and synergies and joint advocacy to be amplified. This requires generating new and ongoing means of knowledge exchanges, both horizontally and vertically, within and between community networks up to high-level government representatives. South-South, triangular, regional and thematic knowledge exchanges should be fostered through virtual and on-site interactions that improve knowledge building and learning, as well as engaging in joint initiatives as suggested in the Plan of Action.

Volunteering can help to tackle the huge challenges of inequality in the region by leaving no one behind and helping reach the furthest behind first. **Ways in which volunteerism can be an integral part of efforts to tackle vertical and horizontal inequalities in the Asia-Pacific region include** helping to collect data on hard to reach communities and providing first hand development assistance through, for example, the provision of basic services. More inclusive volunteering can also help shift power-relations, empowering marginalized groups through participation, engagement, empowerment, analysis and co-creation of solutions to development challenges.

**Volunteering can also be a critical pathway for reducing gender inequalities and promoting women's empowerment.** Yet, it is vital that volunteerism does not reinforce gender inequalities by relying on women's contributions or even coercing women into participating in informal, community-based projects that often carry less status or in-kind benefits than formal volunteering opportunities, which tend to attract more male applicants. Estimates suggest that volunteerism accounts for equal numbers of women and men in Asia-Pacific countries. However, they also indicate that the majority of informal volunteers are women, with actual figures likely to be far higher due to the invisible nature of community-based activities that are often part of women's unpaid workload. This is significant, not least because informal volunteering tends to have lower status and attracts less practical support from stakeholders outside of the community than formal volunteering. Often overlooked in development strategies, informal volunteer work can be better recognized and supported by development actors, so that it does not disproportionately draw the limited time and resources of women and vulnerable groups. In addition, countries would be well-advised to create leadership opportunities through volunteering as part of strengthening women's social, political and economic participation in those contexts where gendered disparities persist. Finally, to accelerate progress on gender equality, programmes and projects should include partnerships with volunteers within and across communities, using volunteer networks to foster positive norms and behaviours and thereby transforming gendered power relations from within.

**Volunteering can create opportunities for inclusion in the context of national and regional demographic change.** For example, in countries with a large youth demographic, well-supported volunteering provides one route to skills and capacity development for employability. Lifelong learning, adaptability and skills development are becoming ever more critical to enable workers to adapt and transform in line with technological advances; equitable access to these opportunities are essential

for the social mobility of future generations<sup>99</sup>, including volunteering, that augments skills and strengthens social capital. As populations live longer, the benefits of volunteering are also particularly well-documented in relation to older age groups. For retired persons, volunteering can substitute for the social and economic roles that they have lost, reducing isolation.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, during periods of rapid demographic change, intergenerational volunteer activities can be an important vehicle for increasing the association of different social or demographic groups, to avoid generation gaps in well-being.

Across the region, volunteers are playing a critical role in disaster risk reduction, environment conservation and protection efforts. However, more needs to be done to **support volunteers from the Asia-Pacific region to spearhead urgent all-of-society climate action.** Successful, volunteer-led climate change mitigation and adaption interventions should be supported, scaled-up and shared across the region through existing and new South-South Cooperation. Volunteering should be integrated into strategies to deliver Nationally Determined Contributions and the goals of the Paris Agreement, recognizing volunteers as a cost-effective adaption and mitigation accelerator particularly suited to developing country contexts. The enormous contributions of local volunteering should be recognized and supported as a fundamental resilience strategy that enables communities to prepare for and respond to the shocks and stresses of climate change. As part of the inclusive resilience-building encouraged by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, special attention should be paid to supporting climate action volunteering that is open to all people and serving all people<sup>101</sup>. Recognizing that Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are particularly vulnerable to climate risks, climate action volunteering should be supported and mainstreamed into policy interventions that build on the recommendations of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway and the Talanoa Call for Action to mobilize all of society and take new multi-stakeholder approaches to tackling climate change<sup>102</sup>. Finally, the power

of volunteers to use new technologies to collect climate data should be harnessed as a cost-effective strategy to achieve the 'data revolution' required to take effective climate action, raise awareness, and promote sustainable behavioural changes.

# NOTES

- 1 UNGA, 2018a.
- 2 UNV, 2018a.
- 3 This includes through the Volunteer Groups Alliance which represents volunteers and VIOs from over 150 countries as a stakeholder group at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups/volunteers>.
- 4 ILO, 2018a; UNV, 2018b.
- 5 Afghanistan, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, France, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Netherlands, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Thailand, Turkey, Viet Nam.
- 6 Australia, Bhutan, Kiribati, Lao PDR, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam.
- 7 The lack of data makes it difficult to measure SDG progress, as less than 15 percent of the official SDG indicators are available for regional progress assessment on some goals.
- 8 IMF, 2018.
- 9 UNESCAP, 2017a.
- 10 UNGA, 2015.
- 11 UNGA, 2015.
- 12 UNESCAP, 2018.
- 13 UNESCAP, 2018.
- 14 UNESCAP, ADB and UNDP, 2017.
- 15 UNESCAP 2015a.
- 16 UN DESA, 2017.
- 17 UNESCAP, 2017a; UNESCAP, 2017b.
- 18 UNESCAP, 2015b.
- 19 UNESCAP 2017c.
- 20 UNV, 2018a.
- 21 UNESCAP, 2017a.
- 22 UNESCAP, 2018a; UNESCAP, ABD and UNDP, 2018.
- 23 UNV, 2018a.
- 24 Government of Cambodia, 2018a.
- 25 Government of Sri Lanka, 2018.
- 26 Government of China, 2018.
- 27 Government of Thailand, 2018.
- 28 UNV, 2018a.
- 29 Government of Thailand, 2018.
- 30 Government of China, 2018.
- 31 Government of India, 2018.
- 32 Government of Thailand, 2018.
- 33 Government of Kazakhstan, 2018.
- 34 Government of Thailand, 2018.
- 35 Government of Sri Lanka, 2018a.
- 36 Government of India, 2018.
- 37 National Disaster Management Committee, 2017.
- 38 Government of Azerbaijan, 2018a.
- 39 Government of Nepal, 2018.
- 40 Government of India, 2018.
- 41 Government of Thailand, 2018.
- 42 Government of China, 2018.
- 43 Government of India, 2018.
- 44 Government of Thailand, 2018.
- 45 Government of Cambodia, 2018a.
- 46 UNV Sri Lanka, 2018.
- 47 Government of Kazakhstan, 2018.
- 48 Government of the Russian Federation, 2018.
- 49 Government of Afghanistan, 2018.
- 50 Government of Sri Lanka, 2018.
- 51 Government of Cambodia, 2018a.
- 52 Government of India, 2018.
- 53 United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, nd.
- 54 UNGA, 2018b.
- 55 Government of India, 2018.
- 56 John Keells Foundation, nd.
- 57 Government of India, 2018.



- 58 UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV, 2018.
- 59 Government of Nepal, 2018.
- 60 UNGA, 2018b.
- 61 De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde, 2018.
- 62 UNFPA, 2018.
- 63 Government of Thailand, 2018.
- 64 Government of Azerbaijan, 2018a.
- 65 ILO, UNDP and UNV, 2018.
- 66 Government of Sri Lanka, 2018b.
- 67 Government of Azerbaijan, 2018b.
- 68 Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Japan, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam (UNV, 2018a).
- 69 Government of Afghanistan, 2018; Government of China, 2018; Government of Sri Lanka, 2018a.
- 70 Government of India, 2018.
- 71 Government of Cambodia, 2018a.
- 72 UNGA, 2018b; Government of Azerbaijan, 2018.
- 73 Government of India, 2018.
- 74 Government of Nepal, 2018.
- 75 ASEAN, 2016.
- 76 Government of Afghanistan, 2018; Government of Cambodia, 2018a; Government of Nepal, 2018.
- 77 Government of China, 2018.
- 78 Government of Thailand, 2018.
- 79 Government of Azerbaijan, 2018a; Government of China, 2018; Government of India, 2018.
- 80 Government of India, 2018.
- 81 Government of Kazakhstan, 2018.
- 82 Government of Georgia, 2018.
- 83 Government of Afghanistan, 2018.
- 84 Government of Kazakhstan, 2018.
- 85 Government of China, 2018.
- 86 Government of India, 2018.
- 87 Government of China, 2018.
- 88 Government of China, 2015.
- 89 UNV and BVF, 2015; UNV and BVF, 2017.
- 90 Government of Thailand, 2016.
- 91 Government of Cambodia, 2018b.
- 92 Government of Thailand, 2018.
- 93 Government of India, 2018.
- 94 Government of Sri Lanka, 2018.
- 95 Government of Afghanistan, 2018.
- 96 ILO, 2011.
- 97 ILO, 2018a.
- 98 ILO, 2018a.
- 99 ILO, 2019.
- 100 OECD, 2015.
- 101 UNISDR, 2015.
- 102 UNFCCC, 2018; UN DESA, 2014.

# ANNEXES

## ANNEX A. KEY SOURCES

This report is based on inputs from Member States of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) through National Situation Analyses submitted in 2018, Voluntary National Reviews and contributions to the 2018 Secretary-General's Report on Volunteering.

National Situation Analyses	Voluntary National Reviews (2017-2018)	Submissions to the 2018 Secretary-General's Report on Volunteering
Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Australia
Azerbaijan	Australia	Azerbaijan
Cambodia	Azerbaijan	Bangladesh
China	Bangladesh	Cambodia
India	Bhutan	China
Kazakhstan	Kiribati	India
Russian Federation	Lao PDR	Indonesia
Sri Lanka	Singapore	Japan
Thailand	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka
Nepal	Viet Nam	

## ANNEX B. TERMS AND CONCEPTS

For the purposes of this report, **volunteerism** is understood to be “a wide range of activities undertaken of free will, for the general public good, for which monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor” (UNGA, 2002).

**Formal volunteering** usually involves volunteers making a regular commitment and contributing their time to a civil society organization, governmental organization or private sector company (UNV, 2015).

**Informal volunteering** happens outside of organizational structures and takes different forms, including community-based activities and larger-scale mobilization of citizens, for example to respond to humanitarian disasters (UNV, 2015).

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# PLAN OF ACTION FOR INTEGRATING VOLUNTEERISM INTO THE 2030 AGENDA

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The Plan of Action for Integrating Volunteerism into the 2030 Agenda is a framework under the auspices of the United Nations through which governments, United Nations agencies, volunteer-involving organizations, civil society organizations, academia and the private sector come together to accelerate the impact of volunteerism for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by: a) strengthening people's ownership of the 2030 Agenda; b) integrating and mainstreaming volunteering into national strategies and policies; and c) better measuring the impact of volunteers.

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**Plan of Action**  
to integrate volunteering  
into the 2030 Agenda