



# #GlobalApplause

Give volunteers a hand



## Statement by Richard Dictus,

Executive Coordinator

United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme

on the occasion of International Volunteer Day (IVD) - 5 December 2016

*International Volunteer Day gives us an opportunity to celebrate and thank volunteers all over the world, while inspiring a new generation of volunteers to join them in acting for peace and development. This year, we give volunteers a round of #GlobalApplause in recognition of their commitment, dedication and passion.*

More than one billion people globally volunteer, internationally and in their own communities, driven by a deep commitment to making the world a better place, for all. Whether volunteering as a UN Volunteer midwife in South Sudan, in Bangladesh to leverage emerging technologies, in Turkey supporting refugee reception, or in Mali achieving peace through social inclusion, volunteers are true global citizens who can help change the trajectory of humankind.

Global citizenship, as exemplified through volunteering, is fundamental to the development, peace and security of our world. Volunteerism gives communities hope, it gives structure when there is none, it provides critical resources to the communities and countries that need them the most. Our common future must prioritize global solidarity, global engagement and “leave no one behind” in order to step up to the challenge of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.



# #GlobalApplause

Give volunteers a hand



Volunteering is a two-way street. Volunteers gain valuable experience, expand their knowledge and enrich their lives through their actions. At a national level, volunteers use their expertise to create meaningful impact for communities and countries. At a community level, volunteering gives voice to those who are marginalized, for example women, youth and those with disabilities, and enables people to effect real change. As well, volunteering enables people to develop skills to participate in society, to integrate, to increase their employability.

Volunteers truly are the best among us and today is an opportunity for us to acknowledge and celebrate their invaluable contributions to peace and development worldwide.

Let's recognize and applaud the efforts of the thousands of people responding to the needs of their fellow humanity through volunteering in the response to the Syrian refugee crisis throughout the Middle East and Europe. In Greece and Egypt, for example, UN Volunteers serving with the UN Refugee Agency, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), provide vital reception and protection services to those seeking safety.

Let's also celebrate the volunteers in Colombia, citizens along with UN Volunteers, who are collaborating on peace building efforts, such as the UNDP 'Volunteers for Peace'. A new project strengthens the capacities and awareness of young volunteers and activists about the peace process in Colombia, peace education and reintegration.

Today, 5<sup>th</sup> December International Volunteer Day, is a time to take stock and celebrate the efforts of all volunteers wherever they are. I would like to express my gratitude to and admiration for the billion volunteers worldwide, who are making peace and sustainable development a reality.

The example volunteers set for us all cannot be underestimated. Today, join me in giving volunteers everywhere a round of **#GlobalApplause**.