Volunteering for Sustainable Development: The Future We’ll Need

By Helen Clark, Administrator, UNDP

Volunteers and volunteership are a significant part of the story for the past decade, and will be an even bigger part of the story for the coming decade. As we begin the second twenty-first-century, we are reminded of the crucial contribution volunteers and volunteerism can make to the global vision for a more just, more equitable, and more sustainable future. It is fitting that the UNDP Administrator comments on the State of the World’s Volunteerism at this moment when the world faces enormous challenges and opportunities.

The significance of volunteership is significant not only because it allows people to give of their time and energy to make a difference in the world, but also because it empowers individuals to take action and be part of the solution. Volunteers are often the first to help after natural disasters, such as the huge natural disasters like earthquakes and floods that have occurred in recent years. They are also instrumental in helping to rebuild communities after conflicts and wars.

The value of volunteership extends beyond the immediate relief efforts. It is a powerful tool for promoting sustainable development and empowering communities to take control of their own future. Volunteers can work to build capacity, provide technical assistance, and help to establish sustainable livelihoods and social services.

For example, during 2011 there were 29 Caribbean UN Volunteers engaged within the Caribbean. These volunteers played a crucial role in supporting the United Nations' efforts to help communities recover and rebuild after natural disasters. They worked on projects ranging from providing medical and psychosocial support to vulnerable populations to helping to establish sustainable livelihoods for those affected by the disasters.

In summary, volunteership is an essential part of the future we want to see. It is a powerful tool for promoting sustainable development and empowering communities to take control of their own destinies. UN Volunteers make a significant contribution to the achievement of the United Nations' sustainable development goals and help to build a better future for all.
UNV ASSIGNMENTS BY REGION

- Asia and the Pacific: 13%
- Africa: 41%
- Europe and the CIS: 54%
- Arab States: 2%
- Latin America and the Caribbean: 4%
- Europe and the CIS: 4%
- Asia and the Pacific: 4%
- Africa: 35%
- Europe and the CIS: 35%
- Arab States: 2%
- Latin America and the Caribbean: 4%

UNV ASSIGNMENTS BY PRACTICE AREA

- Development: 54%
- Governance: 4%
- MDG in 2011: 10%
- Humanitarian: 22%

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- Bringing People Together
- Strengthening Commodity in Food Security
- Meeting the Challenge of Emerging Threats
- Strengthening Resilience to Disasters
- Building Stronger Human Rights
- Making Women’s Change to End Violence Against Women

US Programme Expenditure in 2011 (Thousands of US$) and 2010

- Total: 199,423.5
- UN System & Other Resources: 359.5
- UNV Programme Expenditure in 2011: 114,411.1
- Other Costs: 4,549.5

Average Annual Voluntary Costs in 2011 (Thousands of US$)

- UNV and UNDP/UNV: 16,116.3

Gender

- Male: 968
- Female: 1,805

Origin of UN Volunteers

- From developing countries: 523.4
- From other countries: 523.4

Volunteer Coming to the UN

- In 2011: 1,000

Volunteering brings benefits to both society at large and the individual volunteer. It makes...