



**REMARKS BY**

**RICHARD DICTUS  
EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR  
UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS**

**ON THE OCCASION OF**

**UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board**

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*CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*

Thank you Madame Associate Administrator for your introduction of the Administrator's Report on UNV for the 2012-2013 biennium. We are very grateful for the commitment and unwavering support provided by UNDP leadership to UNV, and for the importance you and the UNDP Administrator attach to the contributions of UNV and UN Volunteers to UNDP and the UN system.

Mr. President,  
Excellencies and Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,  
Madame Associate Administrator,  
Colleagues and friends:

I would like to start my short remarks with an example which encapsulates the positive impact of UNV, UN Volunteers and volunteerism. In March this year, I visited Burkina Faso to meet with the Government and partners. Accompanied by representatives of France, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Belgium, Japan, Germany, USA and the UN country team, we visited a UNHCR refugee camp in Sag-Nioniogo. Over 1,000 Malian refugees have been sheltered there, 35 kilometres outside of the city. 17 UN Volunteers have proved an incredible resource, working for UNHCR in the areas of refugee registration, shelter, water and health. When refugees arrived at the camp, they first set-up makeshift, and then later, temporary shelters. In Burkina Faso's climate these temporary shelters soon wore out, and the traditional materials the people (mainly Touareg) normally used for shelter, could neither be found nor procured. To address this challenge, UN Volunteers in partnership with Red Cross Volunteers engaged the refugee community in a six month consultative process, which involved a number of pilots of a new shelter design – *shown in this photograph* – that was acceptable in traditional terms, durable in climate conditions and low cost. This model is now being adopted across the Sahel.

As I visits different countries and speak to Government Officials, UN Staff and partners, I am struck by the overwhelming agreement that UN Volunteers are agents of change and innovation who are willing to question, to challenge, to act and to change.

That is inspiration in action - delivering creative and impactful solutions for peace and development!

Mr. President,

Inspired by the actions of the 6,500 UN Volunteers, today, I am bringing three main strategic issues to the attention of the Executive Board;

- First, to highlight the contribution of UNV's results to peace and development;
- Second, to outline how UNV is strategically adjusting;
- And third, I would like to extend an invitation to all Board members to build partnership around innovation in volunteering for peace and development

Mr President,

The Administrator's report before you provides an overview of the results of UNV for the biennium. I also have the pleasure to launch the UNV Annual Report for 2013 –titled "Volunteering for the World We Want" – because, as the new sustainable development agenda takes shape, UNV is positioning itself to continue to deliver more volunteer talent solutions for UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes – our main partners.

During the biennium, nearly 13,000 UN Volunteers served 34 UN organisations in 129 countries; over 4,700 international, and 1,700 national UN Volunteers annually. There were over 2,000 UN Youth Volunteers and in addition, there was over 11,300 Online Volunteers who undertook 17,400 online assignments. Volunteers came from 152 countries – 73 per cent of the international UN Volunteers come from countries of the South, serving in the South. With this, UNV continues to be one of the largest promoters of South-South cooperation in the UN system; a truly global exchange of skills, knowledge and best practices among volunteers.

Some 40 per cent of UN Volunteers are women. This is a two per cent increase over the last biennium – this, coupled with the two per cent increased reported two years ago, demonstrates the gradual positive progress UNV is making toward gender balance. However, when analysing this global average, the challenge is found in deploying female UN Volunteers to non-family duty stations and we have set an ambitious target through our Strategic Framework of increasing the percentage of female UN Volunteers in non-family duty stations from 30% in 2013 to 35% by 2017.

Of the total annual number of UN Volunteers, 2,300 were deployed with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, comprising around 40% of its international civilian personnel. Let me restate this, as it is an astounding statistic – more than one out of every three international civilian personnel working in Security Council mandated missions around the world is a UN Volunteer – from the Democratic Republic of Congo with 856 UN Volunteers, Liberia with 312 UN Volunteers, to Afghanistan with 116 UN Volunteers. Furthermore 2,200 UN Volunteers served with the UNDP, constituting 22 per cent of the organization's field presence. An additional 900 represented 20 per cent of the field personnel of UNHCR, and 350 served with WFP. Across diverse professional areas, UN Volunteers are contributing to the delivery of the mandates and results of the UN system.

I could spend hours talking about UNV's engagements with programme countries, and each and every one of our 6,500 UN Volunteers and their stories – each individual is as inspirational as the example in Burkina Faso I gave. The Administrator's report and the 2013 annual report provide many more, however, I would like to highlight two examples where UNV and UN Volunteers have demonstrated unique contributions to peace and development.

The UNV 'Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future' project was launched with initial support from the Federal Government of Germany, as a response to the events of the Arab Spring. Following extensive stakeholder engagement and dialogue, the project was initiated in five pilot countries: Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia and Yemen. This regional flagship pilot project strives to bolster the skills and capacities of young people in the region by building on existing traditions of volunteerism, self-help, solidarity and reciprocity. In April this year, the UNV Deputy Executive Coordinator was in Morocco, and led a partner forum supported by the Government of Belgium. This Forum brought together nearly 100 participants from 13 countries. Participants made up by Government Officials, Civil Society Leadership and Youth Volunteers themselves, reflected on the complexities of creating safe and secure platforms for young people to acquire voice, contribute to social progress and at the same time develop their personal and professional skills set. Providing indications for the next phase of activities, enabling environment, opportunity and empowerment of youth were prioritized; inclusive volunteer's schemes can help overcome historic exclusion and instil with young people a greater sense of purpose and relevance in society.

Just last month, I visited Kathmandu, Nepal and held very positive discussions with the National Planning Commission, which manages a National Volunteer Development Scheme – which UNV has supported

since the mid-1990s. The scheme is highly valued, as there is a formally defined service delivery gap and a skills/competency deficit at the sub-national level; annually some 600 recent graduates from national universities are mobilized as national volunteers to address these gaps. This accelerates the pace of growth in various social services and gives many of these young professionals their much needed first start in their chosen field of work. The National Planning Commission saw this as an emerging strategy to combat the brain drain – where for many of these well qualified competent and ambitious people, emigration has become one of the few alternatives to get started in life.. UNV is working with the Government of Nepal to upscale the National Volunteer Development Scheme beyond its current 600 volunteers.

Mr. President,

2012-2013 was also a time of repositioning, reflection, partner engagement, consolidation and transformation for the future for UNV. As the members of the Executive Board will recall, at the annual regular session of the Board in June last year, I presented the report providing an analysis of the history of UNV, which became a springboard for deeper stakeholder engagement and analysis. That report set the stage for reorientation and institutional change, as reflected in the Strategic Framework 2014-2017. The Framework was launched at an informal of the Executive Board in January this year, a session led by the Vice-President of the Board, the distinguished delegate from Bulgaria – and is Annexed in the Administrator’s Report.

UNV has made much progress to translate the strategic direction and intent signalled to the Board and our partners into action. Programmatically, we have nearly completed the development of global programmes for volunteerism in youth, Peace Building and Crisis response, basic social services, as well as community resilience for environment and disaster risk reduction. We’ve concluded an evaluation of UNV’s contribution to national capacity development through volunteer schemes – bundling our experience and knowledge in supporting national and regional volunteer schemes – which we are utilising to shape a global programme in this niche area for UNV. Additionally, we are well on the way to launching the second State of the World’s Volunteerism Report in early 2015.

To improve organisational performance, we are ensuring that results based management underpins the organisation’s work – we are developing new means of systemically planning, monitoring, and reporting on the impact of our Volunteers. Finally, we are generating considerable focus on internal efficiency and effectiveness by focussing resources and attention on our field presences and their capacity to serve the UN system in location; business process re-engineering and investments in streamlined IT enablers for decentralization; developing our human resources to match the new challenges and adjust our organizational structure and deployment of personnel to new financial and operational realities.

While these efforts are made to find the upwards trend in the utilization of UNV’s services by the UN system, after a nearly 20 percent decline in traditional volunteers numbers since 2010, at the heart of this strategic evolution of UNV is “innovation”: we are seeking to push the boundaries of our work to find the next innovation in volunteering. UN Volunteers are seen a force for innovation wherever they are deployed and UNV has already shown an ability to be innovative in the way it works. I will give two examples.

The UNV Online Volunteering service is an innovation in volunteering UNV is proud of. The service continued to expand, reaching a total of more than 350,000 users. UNV mobilized over 11,000 UN

Online Volunteers annually, who handled over 17,400 assignments in 2013 over the Internet. UNV is currently undertaking an impact evaluation and marketing engagement to see how it can double this number of online volunteers to 22,000 by 2017. A specific example of volunteer innovation in action is the Serbian NGO ASTRA Anti Trafficking Action. They used UNV's Online Volunteer service to further improve their assistance to victims of human trafficking. ASTRA tasked online volunteers with researching and summarizing best practices in therapeutic treatment. The practical guides containing actionable treatment recommendations they compiled was one of the winners of the independently judged UNV Online Volunteering Award.

The second example— is with UN Youth Volunteers on advancing the UN global consultations to shape the post-2015 development agenda. With the UN Millennium Campaign and the World We Want 2015/My World initiatives, UN Volunteers amplified the voices of marginalized and disenfranchised people. Language barriers, functional literacy and accessibility of remote areas to modern communication being a major inhibitors at the bottom of the pyramid, UNV brought unheard voices into the post-2015 dialogue. We see this as a potential innovative opportunity where volunteers can be part of a broader initiative involving 'bottom-up' citizen and community-based monitoring for the post-2015 agenda.

Mr. President,

It is clear that this strategic evolution and innovation can only be possible with strong partnerships; **UNV needs to develop the reputation for innovation and the capacity to build partnerships around it.** Within the UN system, UNV is unique as its programme work is implemented not only directly in partnership with, but largely in service the UN system. There are two of the many great examples of innovative partnerships already in place.

Brazil is for the first time providing fully funding international UN Volunteers through the Sergio Vieira de Mello Scholarship. This scholarship truly captures the resolve and dedication of individuals like Mr. De Mello – the Brazilian UN diplomat tragically killed in the Canal Hotel Bombing in Iraq – to humanitarian work, and it will serve as a shining example of the unshakeable spirit of the United Nations and its Member States to continue working towards global peace and sustainable development even in the most challenging circumstances. In the same spirit, we have promising discussions regarding international youth volunteering ongoing with Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hong Kong and the Republic of Korea. We would welcome many more Member States to join with, Belgium, , Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Luxemburg, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland who provided a total of 500 Volunteers in 2013. I am pleased to be also launching online the **UNV Fully Funded Report 2013** which provides many examples of UN Volunteers assigned to UN projects throughout the world.

With China, I had the honour to join the celebrations of International Volunteer Day on 5 December 2013, with a nationally televised event involved thousands of stakeholders from government, academia and private sector. It engaged over 20,000 volunteers and demonstrated the enormous potential of volunteerism. China is leading the way in innovatively harnessing the power of their volunteer spirit, and UNV is proud to partner with them on this.

A critical resource, for which we rely on partners, is the Special Voluntary Fund - SVF, I am pleased to launch today the SVF report 2009-2013 –. The report outlines the impact and innovative results of projects and programmes funded from SVF, but also highlights the

challenges in this funding mechanism so far. In particular, the challenges that the current SVF mandate does not cover activities in the replication or up scaling phase – and thus we are seeking this expansion of mandate for scaling-up of SVF-funded projects beyond proof of concept and pilot activities. The achievements of the SVF couldn't be made possible without the generous support of key contributors; in 2012 and 2013; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bhutan, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, India, Ireland, Israel, Micronesia, Panama, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand and USA (Peace Corps).

In order to continue our dialogue with you on innovative partnerships, I am pleased to invite you to a reception this evening. The reception is held to celebrate volunteers and volunteerism in peace and development. It is also an opportunity to continue our discussions on partnering and engagement; especially in the context of UNV's new Strategic Framework, 2014-17 and the post-2015 development agenda. The reception is a precursor to a full two day UNV Partnership Forum from 30 September to 1 October, in Bonn, Germany (UNV's headquarters). With the theme of "Innovation in Volunteering Action", the Forum will provide a platform for UNV's longstanding and new partners, including volunteer involving and sending organizations, the private sector and foundations, to have open exchanges on good practices and innovative partnerships. You are warmly welcome to both!

Mr. President,

This has been an important and busy biennium for UNV, as it worked to develop and launch the new Strategic Framework, fine-tuned the organization, and responded to the current and emerging needs of our partners and programme countries in a changed development landscape.

We thank the Executive Board once again for all of your strong and continued support to guide the future of UNV, we thank the Board Secretariat for excellent facilitation, and we look forward to your close engagement with us in the course of the next two years.

As the new sustainable development agenda is taking shape, UNV is poised to deliver more and even better talent for peace and development results of the UN system and its members. I hope you will join me in applauding the inspirational UN Volunteers. I would like to close by saluting you, our partners; Let us continue to innovate together to harness the power of volunteerism for the world we want.