

Good morning, I'm Adjmal Dulloo speaking in place of Cuso International whose representative could unfortunately not attend today. I represent Volunteer groups. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

Cuso International is an international development organization working to improve the lives of people living in poverty and inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean, Central and East Africa, and Southeast Asia as well as in Canada and the United States.

I am also here today as a representative of Forum (The International Forum for Volunteering in Development which is part of the Post 2015 volunteering working group). Forum is a global network of Volunteer-Involving Organizations who are engaging in development efforts in more than 145 countries.

**The question that we are looking into this morning relates to the modalities of participation of the HLPF.** The Rio+20 Outcome Document underscored the role that volunteers play in development, and recognised the central importance volunteer groups have in sustainable development.

The importance of 'volunteer groups' is also recognised in *A Life of Dignity for All*, the Secretary General's report to the UN, presented in July 2012, which recognized that *'Volunteerism should be an integral part of the post-2015 development framework, ... The mainstreaming of volunteer engagement will ensure that people are placed at the heart of sustainable peace and development efforts.'*

As also stated in the modalities Resolution 67/290, establishing the HLPF, we welcome the representation of major groups and "other relevant stakeholders" – such as volunteer groups to participate in High Level Political Forum meetings. We also welcome the notion of the resolution that all these groups are *"encouraged to autonomously establish and maintain effective coordination mechanisms for participation [...] and for actions derived from that participation at the global, regional and national levels, in a way that ensures effective, broad and balanced participation by region and type of organization"*. This will ensure increased legitimacy and high quality outcomes.

Volunteer groups offer a way into communities – as an important form of civic engagement it can serve to strengthen state-citizen mechanisms that contribute to collaboration and shared accountabilities. Volunteer groups can play a critical role in mobilizing community participation and engagement, in monitoring and evaluating the successes and our challenges of global, national and local efforts. It is important to maintain the explicit recognition of who the “other stakeholders” cited in the modalities resolution of the HLPF are: *private philanthropic organizations, educational and academic entities, persons with disabilities, volunteer groups* – they are important actors, each bringing a decisive perspective to the fore. We understand that the seats of stakeholders contributing to the review of progress is not indefinitely extensible but we clearly need to go beyond mechanisms that were initially set up for a sustainable development agenda based on the 1992 definition of the term. We therefore call on member states to explicitly mention these groups in the ministerial declaration of the ECOSOC and HLPF.

To reach our goals, we must have the support of governments to enable and encourage volunteering. Volunteering is a complementary mechanism that carries change in the most remote areas across different goals areas. In fact we should consider the inclusion of targets related to targeted participatory and voluntary capacity building and awareness raising programmes in all countries to leverage broad based changes in behaviours and actions.

In parting I will leave you with the words of Ban Ki-Moon on this very important topic,

*“Volunteerism is a source of community strength, resilience, solidarity and social cohesion. It brings positive social change by fostering respect for diversity, equality and the participation of all. It is among society’s most vital assets”. Ban Ki-Moon (December 2009)*