

***What type of review and monitoring mechanisms should the HLPF adopt to speed up the implementation at the local level, national, regional and international level of the post 2015 sustainable development agenda with the SDGs at its core?***

***How can Major Groups and other stakeholders most effectively support implementation, monitoring, and accountability in the implementation of the Post-2015 sustainable development agenda?***

**Mr. President,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

- I represent VSO International and I speak on behalf of “Volunteer Groups.”
- Governments alone will not be able to implement the Post-2015 sustainable development agenda. To implement effectively and meaningfully, we must look beyond economic, trade and technical assistance to consider human resources, people-centred approaches and solutions that are devised from the ground up.
- Our understanding of development partnerships needs to expand to include actors who have traditionally been invisible. Volunteers are one such group who have played a very specific and important role in extending the reach of vital services to the poorest and most marginalised people by strengthening the capacity of the existing workforce and formal systems. Just think of the 20 million volunteers that supported polio eradication.
- We welcome the emergence of the notion of “Volunteer Groups” as a distinct and complementary actor in various recent UN documents and resolutions related to the post-2015 agenda, including the resolution establishing this Forum. Volunteers are one of key actors who have the capacity to engage people at the local level in planning, monitoring and implementing the new framework in a universal and holistic manner. Volunteering impacts volunteers themselves as well as the people they work with by durably changing their attitudes and life choices. Volunteering helps move people from being passive recipients to being actively engaged in the development processes that affect their lives.
- Volunteers are NOT a cheap or free form of labour. Their contribution is best harnessed when they work alongside paid and trained staff and are supported by them.
- Through the nature of their roles they take on, volunteers often act as a catalyst for others to become more active citizens, helping the communities where they work, to establish ways of participating in and guiding their own development. At its core it is a form of civic engagement and a way to strengthen state-citizen accountability mechanisms. As the II round dialogues on partnerships with civil society have underlined, people demand that partnerships are fully inclusive and participatory, moving beyond consultations to more comprehensive and collaborative forms of engagement.

- Any dialogue or design of implementation and accountability structures must not ignore voluntary groups or actors who in turn facilitate the involvement and empowerment of the poorest and most marginalized.
- For the Post-2015 development agenda to be truly accountable, it must be understood by the people it is designed to help. Civil society and volunteer groups are already playing a huge role in the task of ensuring that people are aware of the process and involved in setting its agenda.
- Finally we believe that a crucial element of any accountability framework is the principle that no goal or target be considered met until it is met for **all** groups.
- To sum up I would like to stress that volunteers are a force of like minded people who come together to listen, to share ideas, build trust and work alongside and within the communities they serve. It is this way of working, this partnership approach, which leads to a form of long lasting social change which promotes ownership, participation and empowerment and inclusion – the essential conditions for systemic and sustainable development.
- We call upon Member States to recognize that volunteerism is a part of the development measuring framework. In this context, we welcome the mention of volunteer groups in Paragraph 16 of the modalities Resolution setting up this very Forum, and we call upon you to maintain “Volunteer Groups” explicitly in the Ministerial Declaration of ECOSOC and HLPF. Thank you very much for your attention.