

## Volunteerism as a Means of Implementation

Excellences, dear delegates, representatives of the United Nations, colleagues from Civil Society, Academia, local authorities, the private sector and other groups,

I'm pleased and honored to speak in a diverse and knowledgeable group at such a crucial moment when member states are called upon to adopt a development framework that will guide the lives of BILLIONS of people for the next 15 years!

As stakeholders in this endeavor, we stand ready to support you.

My name is Nancy Nyambura Wagi Maina. I represent VSO Jitolee, Kenya and I speak on behalf of the youth and Volunteer Groups.

As my previous speakers have underlined, the manifold discussions and consultations led by the UN, but also initiated by stakeholder groups such as Beyond 2015 all over the world, have strengthened the call for people's participation, before, during and after the adoption of the SDGs!

In fact the report recapping the first round of UNDG consultations 'A Million Voices' already stated that the consultations: "revealed a huge appetite and demand for involvement not only in the design of the development agenda, but also in its future implementation"

- ✓ One key lesson from the MDG's is that development cannot be sustainable if it relies only at technical and financial approaches. It must, to be transformative, be based on people-centred approaches and solutions that are devised from the ground up and therefore tackle the issues from the perspective of those who experience the biggest challenges.

The governments can't do it alone.

Notably, information technological sphere presents realities of a world where environmental, social and economic issues don't stop at the national border, especially young people, are connected at real time and aware of global challenges - with a clear understanding of how they link into the local realities As such .the roles of different actors in society have to be re-defined.

We support the Open Working Group's (OWG) Chapeau which calls for the active engagement of governments, civil society, the private sector, the United Nations system, and the active participation and engagement of all citizens.

However, some development actors such as volunteer groups, grassroots community led organizations and marginalized remains unrecognized actors and impact unquantified. Unfortunately, contributions made by volunteers in development often remain invisible, unrecognized and rarely quantified.

Volunteering plays an important role in service delivery, reaching the marginalized(Echoing Marvelous comments-on the need to create grassroots based post 2015 input), manpower development and disaster response and preparedness. The act of volunteering is often the first route through which individuals begin to actively engage in their local community and become empowered and devise solutions to the challenges best known to them as they experience first hand.Indigenous

People (echoing Andrea Carmen of the need to engage indigenous people as essential to devising solutions).

Concurrently, tackling the issues of youth unemployment by engagement of youth volunteers in their indigenous communities, providing youths opportunities for skills/professional enhancement and overall productive employment and decent work for all as stipulated in goal 8

Beyond its immediate contribution, the impact of volunteering reaches much further and enhances sustainability of development outcomes in the true sense of the word: it is a crucial way to positively influence attitudes and mindsets of people at local level, guiding their life choices and actions in the long term, it strengthens civic sense and responsibility and engages all people as active and constructive agents of change.

Through concrete dialogue and action, volunteerism is a powerful means to strengthen trust and social cohesion within diverse societies, plagued by ethnic and religious divides. In fact, volunteerism not only has an effect on the communities benefiting from its action, but equally on attitudes, skills and capacities of the volunteers themselves

If you – if WE - truly want to deliver on 17 goals in a way that makes a difference in the lives of all people making up their society, countries will need to further tap into volunteerism as a mechanism to leverage the energy and local expertise of their populations.

The SG Synthesis Report recaps key messages emerging from the UN led strand of consultations and dialogues over the past 2 years. It explicitly acknowledges volunteerism as a powerful and cross cutting complementary means of implementation. It recognizes its importance in capacity building and expanding dialogue spaces leading to concrete action.

Explicitly the Secretary General's report states: *'As we seek to build capacities and to help the new agenda to take root, volunteerism can be another powerful and cross-cutting means of implementation. Volunteerism can help to expand and mobilise constituencies, and to engage people in national planning, and implementation for sustainable development goals. And volunteer groups can help to localize the new agenda by providing new spaces of interaction between government and people for concrete and scalable actions'. (131)*

Concretely we see volunteers contributing to the delivery across all goal areas as a complementary means of implementation in the spirit of Goal 17. Secondly we see volunteers contributing to the mind shift and awareness raising necessary to change people's everyday actions and choices in a sustainable manner and contributing to social cohesion and inclusion along the spirit of Goal 16.

Thirdly, and going back to Goal 17, online and onsite volunteers can play a huge role in strengthening the accountability of the framework through data collection and monitoring, responding to the need for more localized and disaggregated data.

We therefore count on Member States to replicate these notions in the overall declaration to the SDG Framework as well as in its indicator structure. We count on you to

1. Recognize the contributions made by citizen service in the delivery of MDGs.
2. List volunteers and volunteer groups as a needed partner in development.

3. Call for investment in harnessing volunteering towards realization of the SDGs.
4. Call for quantification of the contribution of volunteers.
5. Call for a policy framework to ensure that the unpaid burden of care taken by women, elderly and children does not condemn them to poverty.

Overall, we count on you to help us to increase opportunities for people to co-create locally appropriate development solutions and to recognize and integrate volunteerism explicitly and systematically in your set of development interventions.

Thank you for your attention