

SDG 8 - Economic Growth

Thank you, Mr. Moderator,

I am speaking on behalf of the **Volunteer Groups Alliance** and want to remind everyone of the important role volunteers play in achieving SDG 8: sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. In addition to the important role governments at all levels play in meeting the SDGs, volunteers and civil society are also making critical contributions to achieving this Goal which must be recognized.

Worldwide there are 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10 and 24 – the largest-ever population of young people. More than 20% are not active in education, training, or employment. To address this, IMPACT2030 is collaborating with UNICEF and Generation Unlimited to mobilize companies around the world and develop a unified strategy that will combine capabilities, resources and innovative approaches to activate employee volunteers to teach critical foundational, digital, job and entrepreneurial skills and prepare youth for the future. One such company, Tata Consultancy Services, has created an IT training program where nearly 3,000 volunteers in 59 cities across North America have

contributed 200,000 hours to train and educate 17,000 students and prepare them for work in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math focused careers.

Another example is Skills for Life, a volunteer program led by United Way Brazil that brings professionals from partner companies and vulnerable youth together to facilitate the development of soft skills. Over the last 10 years, United Way Brazil has directly impacted more than 1,300 young people, involving a similar number of mentors from partner companies.

Volunteers are critical to achieving the SDGs. We must acknowledge and support their contributions if we are serious about creating lasting change.

Thank you.