

Leave No One Behind

Thank you, Moderator,

I am speaking on behalf of the Volunteer Groups Alliance. To make progress on the SDGs and ensure that we leave no one behind, an area of focus needs to be volunteers.

This year, more than a billion people around the world will volunteer, giving freely of their time, talent and expertise to help individuals and organisations. These volunteers, whose efforts are often not recognised or acknowledged, are making a critical contribution to the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs, helping to ensure that no one is left behind.

Volunteers are helping to extend the reach of a range of SDG-related services to poor and marginalised people. Volunteers can get to places that others cannot. From community volunteers promoting access to health services for prisoners, to “big sister” mentors in Nepal who are helping girls stay in school, volunteers are embedded in communities and are reaching those who are “hard to reach.”

We can only begin to meet the SDGs’ ambitious commitments if we listen to the voices of those who are left behind and we involve people in solutions to their own development. Volunteers, who often provide a link to those who are furthest from the sight of governments, can facilitate and enable these processes through citizen led monitoring and other mechanisms. We ask that you listen to these voices and recognise, enable and support their contributions.

Thank you, Member States, for all your support of volunteers.

Delivered by:

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