



REMARKS BY

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ON THE OCCASION OF THE

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ON THE THEME

“Implications of the SDGs on IVCOs”

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



**The President of JICA, Mr. Shinichi Kitaoka,
Members of Forum,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Just one week ago, I had the privilege to experience the excitement in New York over the **newly adopted 2030 agenda**. In fact some of you were there with me! It was a milestone moment for the world community. Pope Francis, Malala Yousafzai and many personalities from the world of the arts and from civil society witnessed the adoption of the 17 Global Goals that will focus sustainable development policies around the world in the next 15 years. Welcoming the adoption of the agenda, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon stressed that the true test of commitment to the new goals will be implementation, and called for a renewed global partnership. **At UNV, we stand ready to contribute to these efforts through volunteering together with you.**

Before going deeper into the new agenda, let's go back for a moment and look at where we are coming from to understand better where we are going and why there is a unique opportunity for us to engage more strongly:

FROM MDGs to SDGS

The MDGs were 8 focused development goals, which created a tectonic shift in the development business. They are results-driven, based on the principle that what gets measured gets done! There were – and still are – 7 thematic Goals alongside Goal 8, which introduced the dimension of partnerships and coordinated approaches.

The MDGs were conceptualized in times of economic prosperity in donor countries, with an expectation to raise additional finances. They focused on a few basic key issues to lift developing nations out of poverty and address basic bottlenecks of development, but they left out many aspects: economic aspects, investments as well as climate change and peace and focused more on specific isolated social issues rather than the underlying conditions and relationships that condition global progress. Another problem with the MDGs was, that they were **more imported than consulted** beyond (certain) member states.



SDGs

Leading up to the Global GOALS – engaging people

If we now look at the Global Goals, as the SDGs are also called, they are the **result of a much broader consultation** across countries. Consultations were initiated and led by the UN but also initiated by governments, civil society and other partners. **Many of you have contributed** to the dialogues and consultations over the last 2 years including the **MY World** survey, which asked people about their priorities. Overall over **8 million** people have participated in these efforts and volunteers have played a crucial role in making this possible.

In fact, **last week**, as part of the celebration for the new goals, **the UN Millennium Campaign organized a ceremony to award initiatives to achieve the MDGs and efforts to include people's voices in shaping the new agenda**. One of the awards was dedicated to longstanding contributions to the MDGs through volunteering. In the presence of representatives from FORUM, IAVE, IMPACT2030, VSA and VSO, I handed over this award to two co-winners from Peru and Uzbekistan: a national volunteer network and a volunteer health promotion initiative. These initiatives underline two aspects of an enabling environment for volunteerism: the importance to build strong multi-stakeholder networks to coordinate and scale up action, and the outreach capacity of volunteer initiatives combining international, national and local action.

We will be working more closely with the UN Millennium Campaign in the near future to explore ways to engage large numbers of people through volunteerism in raising awareness about and monitoring the Global Goals. In fact, the experience of the offline rollout of the MY World survey through volunteers has shown that engaging people requires a person-to-person commitment alongside the outreach through new technologies - allowing to transmit the spark of excitement to contribute to a common endeavor for peace and development. We certainly count on you to support us in this next adventure to bring people's voices and actions to the attention of decision makers and into the policy spaces.

Intergovernmental negotiations and people's voices coming together

But let me go back to the evolution and substance of the SDGs. In addition to the consultations and the survey, the final decision about the goals was taken by **Member States who negotiated the agenda** through two extensive rounds of negotiations in 2014 and 2015. Stakeholders from around the world and across sectors ensured that the voices from the



consultations were brought to the table and member states were quite open to taking them into account. In fact some of **you were closely engaged** in this process and have raised your voices at numerous occasions.

SDG basic facts

As a result of all these consultation and engagement efforts, including your work through the Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group, the new agenda is broader and more ambitious than that of the MDGs. It comprises of **17 Goals with 169 targets and indicators, which are still to be finalized.**

The 2030 Agenda aims at achieving comprehensive **social policy** and **environmental sustainability** as well as **inclusive growth and decent work**. It sets out to eliminate **poverty**, addressing the issue of **inequality** as a major limitation for sustainable development.

The SDGs are structured around 5 principles:

People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace and Partnership.

The agenda is **universal and holistic**. It will have to be addressed in ALL countries and all issues have to be dealt with as an interconnected whole. This introduces a new vision of the world in the development discourse, whereby all countries have homework to do in different areas. This is good news for us, as **volunteering** has always been an approach that **addresses challenges in all countries**, leveraging the creative energies and knowledge of people from all walks of life! We always knew that the business of development is not just an affair of the so-called developing countries, development institutions and development experts, but that there are challenges to solve everywhere by everyone!

The SD agenda particularly focusses in on issues pertaining to inequality and inequity and explicitly aims at **'leaving no one behind'** Again, this is good news for us, as we have always insisted on the notion that volunteers come from all walks of life and that everyone has something to contribute. It's important to move away from a vision of donors and beneficiaries to a vision of mutual accountability and interdependence.

To address the monumental challenges ahead in such a vast agenda, a global shift is required both in terms of awareness about the agenda and in terms of measures to implement it. This will not be possible without volunteers. We have seen some powerful examples in the past of how you can address some of the most pressing challenges: just think of the campaigns to eradicate **POLIO** or to change behaviours around **HIV**.



Overall the SDGs can be sub-divided in 5 sub-segments

- MDG unfinished business (Goals 1-5)
- New areas (Goals 6-11)
- The green agenda (Goals 12 – 15)
- Goal 16: the so-called Governance Goal promotes **peaceful and inclusive societies** with access to justice for all and accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- Goal 17 focusses on **means of implementation and partnerships** and recognizes the necessity to go beyond a business as usual approach. (16)

The desire to focus on local level development and inclusion of all people will require an unprecedented **focus on local level data, including qualitative data**. Achieving this agenda will require unseen **social and behavioral changes** to foster **inclusive growth within planetary boundaries**. The agenda will also require a **new dimension of outreach capacities** to people who can't be reached through formal systems and institutional approaches. Volunteers can literally **walk the extra mile** to reach those who would otherwise remain isolated. The new agenda **questions traditional means of implementation** and **asks for transformative strategies**, including new partnerships with actors which have so far been undervalued – such as volunteer groups

Volunteerism as a cross-cutting means of implementation

In fact, at the end of the consultation process in December 2014, **the UN Secretary General recognized the importance of volunteerism as an approach and of volunteer groups as actors** in his [Synthesis report on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda](#) in the context of innovative ways of enhancing capacities for delivery of the new agenda:

“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 mobilize constituencies, and to engage people in national planning and implementation for the Sustainable Development Goals. And volunteer groups can help to localize the new agenda by providing new spaces of interaction between governments and people for concrete and scalable actions.”



A new ambition which requires new responses

*The ambition of the new agenda and the combination of new issues will require that we are all ready to consider new approaches or, as **Einstein said: You can not solve problems with the thinking that created the problems in the first place***

The Outcome Document of the Summit as well as the FfD3 Outcome document from Addis, which is closely connected, underline the need to **‘unlock the transformative potential of people.’**

It is not our intention to position SDGs as a threat to the status quo; we in UNV have worked too hard in recent years to ensure you have been part of the process and have seen the goals shape up over time. But as we arrive at this junction, collectively we begin to realize that we are looking at change on a planetary scale – for the first time in history of humanity – and this is a big shift, even beyond the tectonic shift the MDGs brought.

Moving forward, we have placed volunteerism in the context of the yet to be developed indicator framework; national and local level processes to domestication of SDGs to become part of plans, programmes and projects; to ensure that it is understood that the desire to ‘leave no one behind’ implies the mobilization globally of large numbers of volunteers to complement the more formal forward looking plans, programmes and projects that will build up the global investment in our collective future; and finally UNV in particular is driven by the conviction that volunteers need to be part of local, regional and global monitoring, review and eventually new people’s accountability mechanisms.

What is predominant in this list are two thoughts:

1. We need to reposition ourselves
2. We need to create new volunteer spaces

Let me try to unpack that for you:

Conceptually, the SDGs raise more questions and require all actors to question how their past behaviour will feature in a new environment. As a development practitioner, I can attest to the changes the MDGs brought forward; how it aligned all actors; how it ensured a focus on results; how they created transparency; how they created partnerships.

In the recent key meetings on SDGs I referred earlier, many indicated that this was a hopeful moment for the world, as we have finally articulated what we need to do to save the planet – to



save mankind. Many however also articulated the fear that we could look back, 15 years from now, and conclude we let this opportunity slip through our fingers. The World has done this before: through inertia, by not adjusting, by avoiding to do the difficult things or by simply becoming complacent and avoid looking at the issues altogether: that is not us you will say! That is not the reaction of Volunteer Involving, people-centered, development Organisations ! And I would agree, providing you see the SDGs as a call to action and you ensure that the Tokyo Declaration becomes your call for action!

As SDGs lead all actors, including new ones, like the private sector, to question the traditional means of implementation. **This gets me to my second point.** As you start the processes of mapping your operations against the SDGs, you will see where new spaces are needed to affect global change. Seeing the needs will not be the same as creating new spaces; that will require a lot more, including developing new partnerships around the innovations that will be needed.

I do not see this as an academic exercise: with the new centrality of planetary boundaries, what are you currently doing, and what are new opportunities? With people at the center and in order to leave no one behind, what can your organization do that it has not done before? The menu of engagement options is nearly without a limit: this is the main advantage of having broad goals coming from even broader consultations – there is room for everyone!

In UNV we see the SDGs as an incredible opportunity – the world community has reset the clock and it is now ticking! We see room for innovation and new ideas, we see new partners like IFI's and the corporate sector, reaching out as they try to find new ways of doing things. There are a few of the statements that stick to ones mind, such as the one of one corporate leader who was of the opinion that 'sustainable development' is only sustainable, because people make it so. And then he is talking my language – volunteer language and we can proceed to create new realities together.

An example for new types of volunteering

I want to come back to the idea to leverage technology to facilitate people's engagement in SDG monitoring

While the MDGs predominantly defined progress based on quantitative data, the SDGs will increasingly have to take into consideration qualitative indicators of progress covering issues



related to satisfaction with services provided, perceptions and attitudes. This will require an increased focus on and engagement of people at the local level.

Whereas internet penetration increases continuously, many people across the world do not own a computer and don't have reliable access to the internet. Nonetheless, an overwhelming majority of people have mobile phones capable of SMS, along with reliable mobile service even in remote areas. Therefore, by leveraging the tools and technologies accessible to all, participatory forms of monitoring SDG progress could be developed to

- Strengthen ownership for the new agenda at community level and foster related approaches and behavior changes
- Strengthen country-level reporting and monitoring of progress against the sustainable development goals.
- Pilot participatory monitoring solutions leveraging mobile technology innovations

Concretely volunteers can increase ownership within communities through awareness raising, capacity building, monitoring and reporting on progress. More specifically, UN Volunteers can be a means to help strengthen relevant national and UN capacities and for building a reporting connection between people and governments based on a new model of active, engaged and 'bottom-up' citizen and community-based monitoring.

Working together during the coming decade and beyond: The Plan of Action

At the upcoming seventieth session of the UN General Assembly, the Secretary-General will report to Member States on progress on volunteerism since 2012 and present a proposed *Plan of Action for the next decade and beyond (2016-2030)*. The Plan of Action aims at integrating volunteering in peace and development policies and programmes through a strategic and collective long-term approach that matches the period of sustainable development goals (SDGs) implementation. In response to the Report and Plan, Member States – led by Japan and Brazil - are currently drafting a resolution on volunteering. Acknowledging the efforts of volunteer-involving organisations from around the world over the last three years, we expect the **resolution** to adopt the **Plan of Action 2016-2030**. This Plan frames our collective action around three strategic objectives: SDG outreach, SDG implementation across all thematic areas, and measurement of volunteerism's contribution to development, including to report on SDG progress. **UNV will facilitate the implementation of the Plan.**



Our commitment

As we approach the next 15 years of cooperation, based on the new priority areas of the Global Goals and the opportunities I have outlined, here is how I see the way forward:

We should use the Plan of Action for the next decade and beyond to rally efforts around a set of common areas of action to:

- Strengthen people's ownership for the new agenda by enhancing opportunities for engagement and enabling environments for citizen action
- Integrate volunteerism into national and global implementation strategies for the post-2015 development agenda to facilitate the engagement of volunteers across all thematic goal areas; and
- Measure the contribution of volunteerism to SDG progress to contribute to a holistic understanding of the engagement of people and their well-being and be part of the monitoring of the SDGs

To accompany this joint journey UNV is ready to support collective efforts by leveraging our convening power to broker connections with governments to strengthen an enabling environment for volunteerism at national level. We plan on a major global Conference, jointly convened by UNV and IFRC in 2020, with a series of regional meetings leading up to it.

We will also work towards **strengthening opportunities for volunteerism across thematic goal areas**, by championing innovative volunteer approaches in areas such as youth volunteering; volunteering to strengthen community resilience in the area of environment and disaster risk reduction; volunteering to provide basic social services as well as volunteering in the context of peace building and reconciliation. Through our unique position as UN entity and VIO, we are ready to continue to advocate for the role of volunteer organisations and volunteers with our peer UN agencies, while widening spaces for Volunteer Groups to engage with the UN system, as we have done over the last years.

We look forward to deepening the work in the area of **research** with all of you so that we can aggregate and leverage our collective findings and develop more consistent joint approaches to measuring. We also look forward to working with you in the area of **reporting**: as outlined before, the SDGs provide a new opportunity to highlight the added value and unique contribution of volunteering to SDG delivery right from the start of the new framework to ensure visibility and recognition of Volunteer Groups as actors in their own rights for SDG implementation.



At UNV we will also be involved in UN System efforts to maintain and **foster citizen engagement in SDG implementation, monitoring and reporting** as well as the wider awareness raising efforts to increase ownership for the goals. Among others we are joining forces with the UN Millennium Campaign, which is being reformulated to support promotion of the new global agenda around the world, and to continue to involve citizens in it.

We also count on **your continued engagement** at global and national level to make sure the voices of volunteer groups are heard to enlarge further opportunities for volunteer engagement. In the context of a universal agenda in an interdependent world, we have to be mindful to ensure that we include a multitude of stakeholders and a multitude of voices into our conversations to reflect all perspectives and explore all opportunities.

To conclude, let me reiterate what I think are the most important commitments we need to make collectively at this point if we want to impact the SDGs. As you develop your recommendations and outcome document for this conference, **I urge you to make 5 commitments:**

1. **A commitment to innovation:** we need to develop ways to unleash the creativity of people, facilitate the exchange of new ideas and new partnerships in civil society, with governments, with the corporate sector and with people that will engage and support the agenda
2. **A commitment to engage more people:** we need to develop new methods of outreach, including through new technologies to ensure more people can engage, participate, be heard, be part of planning, implementation and monitoring mechanisms that will drive SDG achievement. This will require opening up new volunteer spaces and inviting people and other development actors to co-create new realities.
3. **A commitment to leave no one behind:** to fight for equity, to support poverty reduction, to advocate for change in the economic growth model so that it will deliver for the poor and ensure we live within planetary boundaries. This will require co-creating processes with actors of the traditional economic development domain (corporates, the financial sector and International Financial Institutions). We need to find ways to engage more, more directly and more constructively with the poor.
4. **A commitment to engage more volunteers in climate change adaption and environmental conservation activities.** Sustainability requires massive and large scale people's engagement with larger investments in climate change mitigation and ecological safeguarding the future – new volunteer spaces, new partnerships and new results!



5. **A commitment to build stable, well governed and peaceful societies** by ensuring people's engagement and a commitment to create new volunteer spaces for and by people, to enable them to take charge of their own development, hold duty bearers to account for making the changes required and be part of all aspects of sustainable development.

Let's maintain and expand the momentum of our collaboration and ensure we are ready to face the challenges and opportunities the new agenda brings for us in the coming months and years!

Thank you very much.