



International Forum for Volunteering in Development
Forum International du Volontariat pour le Développement

THE TOKYO CALL TO ACTION

Representatives of international volunteer cooperation organisations and volunteer-involving organisations from around the world gathered in Tokyo 4th–7th October 2015 for the annual meeting of the International Forum for Volunteering in Development. A diverse range of organisations, including civil society, government agencies, UN bodies, academia and the private sector, Forum members work in partnership at home and across borders for a more just and sustainable world. We are committed collectively to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to addressing poverty and inequality, and to the recognition of the importance of volunteerism in achieving this universal agenda.

The experience of the Millennium Development Goals has shown us that sustainable development requires concrete, people-centred approaches and solutions that are conceived and built from the ground up. We know that volunteering is a powerful force for change. Given the universal scale and ambition of the 2030 Agenda, now more than ever the efforts of volunteers are needed to ensure that no one is left behind.

Discussions around the development of the SDGs have provided a platform for volunteer-involving organisations to push for the recognition of volunteerism as a means of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The United Nations Secretary-General's Synthesis

report on the Post-2015 Agenda recognises volunteering as a “powerful and cross-cutting means of implementation” for the SDGs. It recognises the role of volunteerism in expanding and mobilising constituencies, building strong, vibrant communities, engaging people in planning processes, and localising the agenda by providing new spaces of interaction between governments and people for concrete and scalable action. Specifically:

- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls on governments and public institutions to work closely with volunteer groups on implementation.
- The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, adopted by Member States in July 2015 and intrinsically linked to the 2030 Agenda, includes volunteers as part of an “enhanced and revitalized global partnership for sustainable development, led by governments...a vehicle for strengthening international cooperation for implementation of the post-2015 development agenda”.
- Volunteer groups are recognised as an important stakeholder at the High-level Political Forum (HLPF), the intergovernmental body responsible for follow-up and review of progress on the SDGs, providing political leadership, guidance and recommendations on sustainable development to Member States for the coming 15 years.
- The 2015 UN Secretary-General’s Report on integrating volunteering in the next decade contains a Plan of Action for the coming decade and beyond, which aims to strengthen people’s ownership of the development agenda through enhanced civic engagement and enabling environments for citizen action.

Through our collective advocacy efforts at local, national and global levels, we have achieved a historic level of recognition within the UN system. It is vital that volunteering organisations continue to promote and engage at the UN with the HLPF and other processes to occupy and expand the spaces that are now open to us, and to build alliances with other influential actors and networks. This will require concrete efforts to build partnerships, mobilise volunteers, provide evidence of achievements and effectively communicate our individual and collective contributions. We believe this will contribute to more holistic understanding of people’s engagement, participation and well-being, and be integral to the monitoring of the SDGs.

On 1st January 2016, a new global agenda will be in place to guide global efforts in eliminating poverty and inequity. We commit to work together to create an environment conducive for volunteers and their partners and to achieve greater visibility, recognition and resourcing of volunteerism. Volunteer organisations have a key role to play in facilitating people’s engagement, complementing government actions, multiplying the outreach and effectiveness of development interventions, and doing development differently.

To ensure that these aims are achieved, we commit to:

- Promote the integration of volunteerism into national implementation strategies for the 2030 Agenda.
- Collectively measure and document the impact of volunteerism in achieving this Agenda, including through the creation and use of new tools and frameworks, and to register our planned initiatives with the UN through ‘Partnerships for SDGs’.
- Share this information widely in order to demonstrate the value of volunteering to the High-level Political Forum, national governments and the general public.
- Contribute to building a strong base of support for volunteering in development.
- Broaden the coalition of volunteer groups to other networks and organisations that work with and through volunteers, including youth and corporate volunteers.
- Communicate regularly with our volunteers, partner organisations, supporters and wider networks about the SDGs and the role of volunteers and their partner organisations in achieving them.
- Support and contribute to the United Nations’ Plan of Action for the integration of volunteering in peace and development for the next decade and beyond.

In closing this conference, we stand ready to support efforts to achieve the global goals for sustainable development through concrete action at local, national and global levels. To strengthen our collective actions, Forum invites our colleagues in all sectors to endorse this declaration and support this Call to Action.

See the list of signatories to the Tokyo Call to Action here:

<http://forum-ids.org/news/tokyo-call-to-action-signatories/>