

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY,
VOLUNTEER GROUPS' SECTORAL
POSITION PAPER TO THE HLPF**

September 2017

Executive Summary of Volunteer Groups’ Sectoral Position Paper to the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) 2017.

Volunteers and volunteer effort are essential to the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and to achieving the aim of eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity.

Volunteering, when properly supported, facilitates access to services in health, education and many other areas to some of the poorest, most marginalised or most vulnerable communities, ensuring that no-one is left behind.

For poor and marginalised people, the opportunity to volunteer is a chance to move from being a passive recipient to being actively engaged in development processes. The act of volunteering is often the first route through which individuals begin to actively engage in their community and become empowered to realise their rights.

Volunteers will be central to citizen-led monitoring, which offers opportunities collect data at a level that is closer to poor and marginalised people.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR VOLUNTEERING

Volunteerism is universal, but it is strongest when it is recognised and supported. Volunteers are most effective where governments create a conducive environment for volunteer participation and are responsive to volunteer-led community initiatives.

Some governments recognise the value of systematic legislation, policies, structures and programs for volunteer engagement, and enable more people to volunteer. The UN system, the private sector, volunteer groups and volunteers themselves also have a role to play.

VOLUNTEERING AND THE FOCUS GOALS FOR HLPF 2017

Volunteers will be essential to the achievement of the goals to be reviewed in depth at this year’s HLPF.

Goal 1

Much of the institutional infrastructure for delivering social assistance the world over is in the hands of volunteers who are essential to the work of food banks, homeless

shelters, drug abuse prevention clinics, workforce training centres, micro-finance self-help groups, and a host of other organisations.

Goal 2

Volunteers extend new knowledge into rural settings. They assist farmers in organising themselves, and promote agricultural cooperatives. They operate feeding programs, distribute nutrition packages to pregnant women and provide nutrition education.

Goal 3

Volunteers provide vital supplements to health care available through government, reaching out to marginalised groups and delivering healthcare to the neediest populations in even the most dangerous contexts.

Goal 5

Volunteerism can provide women with leadership experience and access to local political structures, provide educational opportunities for women students, help women start businesses, educate women on financial literacy, offer venues to campaign against harmful practices, promote access to reproductive education and reproductive health, work to combat violence against women, and encourage female political participation.

Goal 9

Volunteer groups are crucial providers of microcredit resources that grow small- and mid-sized enterprises. These businesses are important sources of social innovation, devising new, more effective ways to address and reduce social and economic problems.

Goal 14

Volunteers advocate for sustainable conservation of the oceans and protecting endangered species, cleaning trash and waste, rehabilitating marine life, and engaging in issues like overfishing and deep-sea drilling.

VOLUNTEER GROUPS' RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE HLPF

- 1) Formally recognise the contribution of volunteering to the implementation of the SDGs through Member States' voluntary national reviews
- 2) Ensure that Volunteer groups are fully recognised and supported in national plans and strategies for implementing the 2030 Agenda
- 3) Note the commitment of volunteer groups to sharing in the accountability for the successful delivery of the SDGs
- 4) Affirm full support for the implementation of A/RES/67/290, which supports the participation of non-governmental actors
- 5) Ensure the data for monitoring the SDGs is captured through participatory processes and includes the perspectives of the most marginalised voices
- 6) Ensure the accountability, transparency and review framework for the SDGs involves community consultation at all levels