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**United Nations Volunteers**

## **United Nations Volunteers programme**

### **Annual Report of the Administrator**

*Summary*

In 2024, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme demonstrated resilience and impact amidst global challenges, mobilizing a record 14,631 United Nations Volunteers to support peace, development, and human rights across 169 countries. They contributed to the work of 59 United Nations entities, advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while supporting emergency relief and recovery efforts and working towards a more equal and tolerant world. The report highlights UNV achievements throughout the year, aligned with the programme's 2022–2025 Strategic Framework. It includes a summary of performance indicators, details on United Nations system entities hosting United Nations Volunteers, and statistical and financial overviews presented in Annexes I–IV on the Executive Board website.

*Elements of a decision*

Given the accomplishments outlined in the report, the Executive Board may wish to acknowledge significant UNV achievements in 2024, its contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals and its effective response to emergencies; take note of progress in enhancing agility and achieving efficiency gains, and, in this regard, encourage UNV to continue streamlining its business processes and adapting its field presence to meet the evolving needs of United Nations country teams worldwide; and commend all United Nations Volunteers for their exemplary service to the United Nations and their contributions to peace, development and human rights across the world.

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Annexes (available on the Executive Board website)

- I. Performance indicators, 2022-2024
- II. List of United Nations entities hosting United Nations Volunteers in 2024
- III. Statistical overview, 2024
- IV. Financial overview, 2024

1. In accordance with Executive Board decision 2018/8, this report details the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme's 2024 performance. Chapter I covers annual results against the Strategic Framework's outcomes and outputs. Chapter II discusses the adaptive evolution of the UNV field network as an important enabler of the organizational results and Chapter III highlights UNV priorities in 2025.

2. UNV has entered the final year of its 2022-2025 Strategic Framework with positive momentum. Despite global development challenges and growing humanitarian concerns due to wars, political instability, natural disasters, the United Nations development system's financial constraints and the scaling back of United Nations peacekeeping operations, UNV stood tall and delivered.

3. These challenges demanded a proactive response to the needs of United Nations partners at a country level and, simultaneously, extra attention to the duty of care for United Nations Volunteers. Yet, UNV coped, adapted and eventually led volunteer action for sustainable development and emergency response, right down to the grassroots. The focus on continuous improvements and innovation shone through new and highly relevant volunteer solutions and initiatives.

## I. Highlights of results achieved in 2024

4. UNV actively collaborated with the United Nations system, Member States and civil society to drive peace, development, and humanitarian efforts through volunteerism. This chapter presents an overview of key results based on the Strategic Framework's three main outcomes and six outputs. Annex I provides a detailed performance overview by outcome, output and indicator.

**Contributing to a people-centred United Nations: The functioning of the United Nations system is supported through the engagement of empowered United Nations Volunteers.**

5. In 2024, the UNV grassroots-focused and people-centred approach stood the test and shone as a beacon of resilience. The spirit of compassion and solidarity resonated deeply across the 181 countries from which United Nations Volunteers came during the year. They expanded the United Nations system's community reach, strengthened local ownership and deepened the impact of United Nations operational activities for development.

6. UNV mobilised a record-breaking 14,631 United Nations Volunteers, a 14 per cent increase from 2023 and a 77 per cent increase from pre-pandemic levels in 2019. This demonstrated the strength of UNV partnerships across the United Nations system worldwide and the essential part United Nations Volunteers play in diverse field-related and technical roles, from community development, human rights and humanitarian assistance to water and sanitation, health services, information management and monitoring.

7. Data from the UNV Volunteer Reporting Application indicated that in 2024, United Nations Volunteers contributed to all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Of those, 27 per cent contributed to Sustainable Development Goal 16, peace, justice and strong institutions, reflecting a high number of United Nations Volunteers in fragile development contexts. This was followed by Sustainable Development Goal 5, gender equality (23 per cent); Sustainable Development Goal 3, good health and well-being (19 per cent); Sustainable Development Goal 17, partnerships for the goals (17 per cent) and Sustainable Development Goal 10, reduced inequalities (14 per cent), pointing to the breadth of United Nations Volunteers' efforts towards the 2030 Agenda.

8. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) saw the highest number of United Nations Volunteers (4,161) among all United Nations entities. They were deployed in 130 countries and accounted for 13 per cent of the overall UNDP workforce.

9. Across seven states in Brazil, United Nations Volunteers assisted smallholder farmers in the UNDP Floresta+ Amazon initiative on reducing deforestation emissions. In India, they supported biodiversity conservation in the Himalayas, central arid and semi-arid regions, coastal landscapes and other ecosystems. In Chad and Niger, United Nations Volunteers mobilized for UNDP country offices supported community development to stabilize the Lake Chad Basin and in Ukraine they supported energy, environmental and other reconstruction efforts.

10. There were 3,546 United Nations Volunteers integrated as civilian personnel into United Nations Secretariat entities and missions. The majority (1,588) were international volunteers who served in United Nations peacekeeping operations, a mainstay in efforts to provide mission support, uphold human rights, promote access to justice, reduce violence, integrate ex-combatants into society, and provide public information.

11. The peacekeeping missions hosting the largest numbers of United Nations Volunteers were the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). In addition, 404 United Nations Volunteers served in United Nations special political missions, mainly the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (UNVMC) and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

12. UNV support to various entities under the Secretariat was not limited to United Nations missions. Valuable contributions were made worldwide by 417 United Nations Volunteers working with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 255 with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and 170 with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), among others.

13. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, United Nations Volunteers supported UNODC in community-level drug prevention and anti-trafficking. In Colombia, they assisted OCHA in humanitarian data analysis in the country's most challenging areas. In the Republic of Moldova, United Nations Volunteers supported the OHCHR protection monitoring project by collecting primary data on the rights of Ukrainian refugees. And in Niger, they promoted peace and social cohesion through dedicated assignments with OHCHR and OCHA.

14. During the reporting period there was a significant surge in the number of United Nations Volunteers with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), totalling 2,299 or a 17 per cent increase from the previous year. United Nations Volunteers were deployed in 134 countries.

15. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, young United Nations Volunteers, including persons with disabilities, were deployed as Youth Champions nationwide. In Djibouti, United Nations Volunteers expanded skills for out-of-school girls and supported non-discriminatory education policies. In Ecuador and Mexico, they served under the Social Champions initiative to support face-to-face and telemarketing fundraising efforts. In Türkiye, United Nations Volunteers assisted with child protection as earthquake response efforts continued in 2024, while in Tunisia, they supported disability-sensitive social protection for children.

16. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) hosted 973 United Nations Volunteers, a 3 per cent decrease from the previous year, mostly as a result of a fall in funding of specific refugee operations. These volunteers delivered on refugee protection and humanitarian action in 74 countries, many of which were affected by war and conflict.

17. In Jordan, 32 refugees were empowered as United Nations Volunteers to help maintain energy systems and provide social care to the elderly and persons with disabilities amongst over 42,000 Syrian refugees in the Al Azraq camp. In Mauritania, United Nations Volunteers supported water, sanitation, shelter and the distribution of non-food items in the Mbera refugee camp. In Uganda, they fostered social cohesion by connecting host communities to refugee-led organizations in the West Nile region, home to over 19 refugee settlements and some 220,000 refugees. In Romania and Slovakia, United Nations Volunteers, including 12 refugees, assessed the needs of Ukrainian refugees, monitored assistance programmes and supported the provision of shelters and access to basic social services.

18. With the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), 948 United Nations Volunteers were the backbone of migrant support in 53 countries, an almost twofold increase in the agency's volunteer workforce.

19. In Colombia, United Nations Volunteers across five cities screened applications for migration and offered guidance on migration services. In Mali, they trained migrants and supported their access to employment opportunities. In Pakistan, United Nations Volunteers, including three

refugees, served as Dari interpreters and in Thailand, they worked as enumerators and tracked the mobility and living conditions of displaced populations in five provinces.

20. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) engaged 887 United Nations Volunteers, a 69 per cent increase compared to the previous year. The service of United Nations Volunteers boosted reproductive health programming and monitoring in 98 countries.

21. In Nigeria, United Nations Volunteers worked as gender advocates and supported adolescents and youth programmes. In Colombia, they worked alongside the Government's humanitarian response and guided communities on health and gender-based violence for 1.8 million Venezuelan refugees. In Sri Lanka, United Nations Volunteers supported the 16 Days of Activism and in Tunisia, they raised awareness of reproductive rights via social media.

22. In 2024, 517 United Nations Volunteers served with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in 72 countries, a 32 per cent increase compared to the previous year.

23. In Iraq, United Nations Volunteers promoted women's empowerment in education, healthcare and civic rights, fostering a more wide-ranging society and ensuring that women have the opportunities to thrive in various sectors. In Ecuador, they promoted opportunities for women in national sports. In Uzbekistan, United Nations Volunteers supported UN-Women advocacy and outreach and in China they provided vocational training to women farmers in green energy and entrepreneurship.

24. Advancing the mandate of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 82 countries, the number of United Nations Volunteers receded to 510, a 7 per cent decrease, mostly due to the completion of some WHO volunteer initiatives implemented in previous years.

25. The flagship programme Africa Women Health Champions with the WHO regional office for Africa continued its second phase in 2024, providing essential health services to 40 African countries. Some 209 United Nations Volunteers, most of them women, served across WHO country offices in Africa in 29 professional areas of public health. In Sudan, through field visits to North Darfur, United Nations Volunteers provided essential health services for internally displaced persons. In Pakistan, United Nations Volunteers assisted with vaccine-preventable diseases and flood response in 13 districts, and in Mauritania, they supported the polio response and epidemic detection in 15 regions.

26. Marking the commitment to food security in 62 countries, the World Food Programme (WFP) hosted 303 United Nations Volunteers, a 20 per cent decrease from the previous year, mostly due to a freeze in the recruitment of United Nations Volunteers in the context of the Programme's global restructuring.

27. In the State of Palestine, United Nations Volunteers assisted WFP with logistics and humanitarian data management, while in Egypt, other United Nations Volunteers helped to assess the risk of famine during the war in Gaza. In Mozambique, they monitored food security, especially in conflict-affected Cabo Delgado. In Nigeria, they supported nutrition and recovery after northern floods and in the five Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger and Senegal) a group of United Nations Volunteers with the Sahel University Network for Resilience (REUNIR) a WFP-supported network of six universities, promoted food security research and solutions.

28. In addition to dedicated partnerships with individual United Nations entities, under the strategic guidance of the General Assembly through the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for the United Nations system,<sup>1</sup> UNV strives to contribute to system-wide action and results. Against this background, in 2024 UNV leveraged and, where possible, contributed to strengthening United Nations development system-wide and inter-agency priorities:

(a) Implementation support of activities under the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), especially in the areas of community development. To this end, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, United Nations Volunteers served in a joint UNDP and IOM project strengthening peaceful and resilient communities, while in Madagascar, United Nations Volunteers with UNDP, OHCHR, UNICEF, and the United Nations

<sup>1</sup> [A/RES/75/233](#) (2020)

Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization amplified civic participation and quality education for all.

(b) Support to joint programmes and inter-agency initiatives. In Armenia, United Nations Volunteers, with UNDP and UNHCR, supported local administrations and communities hosting refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh. In Bangladesh, United Nations Volunteers from minority groups assisted a UNDP and United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) joint initiative with the Government to contribute to climate adaptation of vulnerable communities in 11 districts.

(c) Support to United Nations conferences. In Colombia, UNV partnered with the United Nations Resident Coordinator Office (UNRCO), IOM, the Ministry of Environment and the Mayor's office in Cali to mobilize 410 United Nations Volunteers to support the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD). In Saudi Arabia, 654 United Nations Volunteers facilitated logistics, translation and communications for the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) through joint collaboration with UNDP, the UNCCD Secretariat and national counterparts.

(d) Joint United Nations advocacy. Across Europe and Central Asia, 230 United Nations Volunteers helped to boost a UNFPA and UN-Women regional initiative in 11 countries under the 16 Days of Activism campaign. These volunteers, among them persons with disabilities, powered all stages of the joint initiative, from webinars with community leaders and influencers to social media campaigns.

**Expand opportunities with United Nations entities for more and diverse people to support United Nations development, peace and humanitarian efforts.**

29. Throughout the year, United Nations Volunteers supported 59 United Nations entities in 169 countries and territories. The number of nationalities represented increased to 181 from the 173 baseline prior to the start of the current Strategic Framework in 2021, thus bringing UNV a step closer to engaging the communities in countries across the entire United Nations membership and eliminating the notion of “unrepresented nationalities” among United Nations Volunteers.

30. The largest numbers of United Nations Volunteers in 2024 came from sub-Saharan Africa (4,428), Latin America and the Caribbean (3,347), Asia and the Pacific (2,074), the Arab States region (2,030), Western European and Other States (1,646), and Europe and Central Asia (1,106).

31. Of the total number of United Nations Volunteers, 10,150 served as national United Nations Volunteers in their countries of origin, while 3,175 served as international United Nations Volunteers in other countries. This demonstrated the commitment of United Nations partners and UNV to enhancing the capacity of local volunteer talent in peace and development worldwide, as well as to South-South cooperation.

32. The average age of United Nations Volunteers was 34, while the overall age range was from 18 to 79 years. Following the adoption of General Assembly resolution A/RES/79/148 on ‘Strengthening volunteerism for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, leaving no one behind,’ UNV is reinforcing its efforts to promote intergenerational and lifelong volunteering, mobilizing and supporting volunteers at all life stages. In 2024, there were 167 United Nations Volunteers aged 60 and above. At the same time, 2,166 United Nations Volunteers aged between 18 and 26 represent the commitment of UNV to the United Nations Youth2030 Strategy.

33. The proportion of women United Nations Volunteers increased to 59 per cent, a two per cent rise from 2023. While the ratio points to significant progress in the representation of women among United Nations Volunteers, UNV is mindful that global averages might conceal disparities across United Nations entities. To this end, UNV continued to prioritize achieving gender parity in United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions. The ratio of women in the five missions with the largest participation of United Nations Volunteers, UNMISS, MINUSCA, MONUSCO, UNVMC and UNAMA, increased from 43 per cent prior to the start of the current Strategic Framework in 2021 to over 47 per cent in 2024.

34. In 2024, UNV deployed 273 UN Volunteers with disabilities across 26 United Nations entities, a 41 per cent increase from 2023. The largest number of UN Volunteers with disabilities worked in UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN-Women, and UNRCOs, while the largest number of persons with

disabilities serving across United Nations entities was in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia, Mali, Rwanda and Saudi Arabia.

35. Pursuing continuous innovation, UNV partnered with United Nations entities on the following targeted corporate initiatives:

(a) UNICEF on the Youth on the Move initiative, which enabled United Nations Volunteer opportunities for refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and migrants aged 20-32 years.

(b) UNAMA to empower 44 Afghan women as United Nations Volunteers to serve as political and judicial affairs officers, nurses and in other critical roles, giving women more opportunities in public spheres.

(c) UNRCOs in West and Central Africa to recruit and enhance the professional capacities of persons with disabilities as United Nations Volunteers.

36. United Nations entities, Member States and civil society partners posted requests for 22,962 Online Volunteers, a significant increase of 65 per cent compared to 14,025 in 2023, pointing to the recognized role of UNV as an enabler of remote volunteer talent solutions in the era of global digital transformation.

(a) Over 1,000 Online Volunteers supported the SDG AI Lab of the UNDP Istanbul International Centre for Private Sector in Development (ICPSD) in the areas of artificial intelligence, machine learning algorithms, geographic information systems, and web applications for reducing natural disasters.

(b) 1,000 Online Volunteers supported the United Nations Office for Partnerships (UNOP) for the Women Rise for All global campaign through a survey of over 25,000 women in 185 countries.

(c) 1,000 Online Volunteers were mobilized for UNDP for the #IAMsahel campaign, which spotlighted opportunities often overshadowed by the prevailing focus on conflicts and crises.

(d) 500 Online Volunteers from 30 African countries supported an awareness-raising campaign during the Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) football tournament in Côte d'Ivoire by creating communications material on violence against women and the transmission of sexual diseases.

(e) 200 Online Volunteers led awareness-raising about the impact of climate change on health, water, and food safety, managing chronic illnesses, and infection prevention during the Arba'in pilgrimage in Karbala, one of the world's largest religious gatherings. The campaign was a joint partnership with the Iraqi Ministry of Health, UNDP, UNFPA, WHO and WFP.

#### **Motivated, well-equipped volunteers contribute to United Nations efforts.**

37. The proportion of United Nations Volunteers who reported that their assignments led to personal and professional development held steady at 92 per cent, compared with the annual target of 94 per cent. 89 per cent said they were satisfied with their volunteer experience, a two per cent increase compared to last year.

38. In 2024, UNV expanded learning opportunities for United Nations Volunteers, strengthening their personal and professional growth through diverse capacity-building initiatives. Some 11,269 United Nations Volunteers took part in 167 learning initiatives, including workshops with 15 United Nations host entities across 30 countries, gaining assignment-specific skills and promoting collaboration. The workshops equipped volunteers with essential skills in many areas, including anti-racism, leadership, conflict resolution, career management and prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. Nearly 6,000 United Nations Volunteers engaged in competency-based self-paced learning, including language platforms and proficiency exams. UNV also launched an inter-agency coaching initiative to support volunteer growth and wellbeing, and to promote a more holistic and tolerant outlook.

39. The 2024 Report of the Secretary-General on the Composition of the Secretariat<sup>2</sup> acknowledged a diversified United Nations Volunteer base in terms of gender, nationality and geographic regions. The report also noted that in 2020-2023, 8.7 per cent of United Nations Volunteers in the Secretariat transitioned to staff roles, demonstrating the potential of UNV to bring multifaceted talent into the workforce.

**Serving the United Nations system: UNV is a fit-for-purpose organization contributing to the efficiency gains of the United Nations system.**

40. Against the backdrop of a challenging year, UNV continued to strive for organizational agility and operational efficiencies. UNV improved gender representation among its staff, leveraged digital solutions, strengthened its volunteer talent acquisition outreach and sought to diversify the donor base.

41. Working towards gender parity at all staff levels and ensuring a geographically broad-ranging workforce was at the core of UNV in 2024. While overall female-to-male staff distribution in UNV is 61 per cent and 39 per cent respectively, the senior women leadership cadre is comprised of the deputy executive coordinator, four out of six regional managers as well as 63 per cent of country coordinators. Globally, UNV personnel represent 70 countries, with 76 per cent coming from the Global South, compared to 73 per cent in 2023.

**United Nations partners are provided with more efficient services.**

42. The financial value of UNV activities totalled \$317.5 million in 2024, an increase of \$5.9 million, or two per cent, from 2023 as illustrated in Annex IV. The stabilized level of regular resources for UNV between \$8.4 and \$8.9 million during the last two Strategic Framework cycles forms the organization's operational bedrock.

43. UNV continued to enhance its organizational agility with a view to achieving efficiency gains and improving partnership experiences of United Nations Volunteers and host United Nations entities. In 2024, the practical avenues of achieving these objectives included: a) incremental empowerment of regional offices and field units with clear accountability frameworks; b) decentralizing and de-concentrating volunteer recruitment and deployment functions to bring them closer to the country level; c) enhancing digital solutions in the volunteer cycle processes while preparing for application of artificial intelligence; and d) leveraging UNDP corporate platforms such as Global Shared Services Centre.

44. These efforts yielded tangible efficiency gains during the year. UNV has exceeded the target on the deployment speed of national United Nations Volunteers: 20 days on average in 2024 as compared to the 23 days in the Strategic Framework. For international United Nations Volunteers, the deployment speed was 59 days for all assignments except those fully funded by the donors (where the deployment speed remained high at 131 days, partly due to dependency on donor timelines). Building on these results, in 2025 UNV will review the structure and the level of overhead costs for volunteer deployment and administration and update its administrative fees and cost recovery elements.

**The institutional effectiveness of UNV is enhanced.**

45. UNV continues to depend on its flexible and unearmarked resource, the Special Voluntary Fund (SVF) to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Framework results. In 2024, the Fund received contributions totalling \$4.9 million from 11 donors<sup>3</sup> (13 donors as a cumulative total so far during the Strategic Framework 2022–2025). Strategic uses of the Fund include: (a) deploying United Nations Volunteers for emergency and crisis response; (b) expanding opportunities for youth, persons with disabilities and from indigenous communities, and boosting volunteers from unrepresented states; (c) celebrating volunteer contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals, investing in volunteer

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<sup>2</sup> [A/79/581](#) (2024)

<sup>3</sup> Bangladesh, China, Czechia, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Switzerland, Thailand and Türkiye



research, honouring International Volunteer Day and gearing up for the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development in 2026.

46. In 2024, contributions to the UNV full funding programme amounted to \$20.5 million, an increase of 7 per cent from 2023. UNV deployed 846 United Nations Volunteers who were fully funded by governments and academic institutions.<sup>4</sup>

**Promoting volunteerism: The efforts of Member States to deliver on the 2030 Agenda are supported through volunteerism as an effective means of implementation and engaging people.**

47. In its activities to promote volunteerism, UNV focuses on the 2030 Agenda, as well as additional guidance from the Member States through United Nations General Assembly resolutions adopted in 2024; on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system,<sup>5</sup> which recognizes volunteerism as a key tool for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals; and on strengthening volunteerism to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals,<sup>6</sup> which encourages Member States to integrate volunteerism into national and sectoral strategies, plans and policies.

48. In 2024, UNV supported Member States to enhance volunteer engagement in the 2030 Agenda by integrating it into national development plans and Voluntary National Reviews. During the year, 36 Member States presented these reviews, of which 23 acknowledged the positive impact of volunteers on the Sustainable Development Goals.

49. UNV provided technical support to 16 United Nations teams<sup>7</sup> on the ground for the integration of volunteerism in common country assessments and sustainable development cooperation frameworks, as well as to 11 new UNDP country programme documents.<sup>8</sup> Five UNFPA country programme documents<sup>9</sup> integrated volunteers to strengthen the capacity to deliver results, and one UNICEF country programme document<sup>10</sup> acknowledged the contribution of volunteers in child protection (Sustainable Development Goal 16).

**Brokering of data, research, evidence and knowledge on volunteerism for the Sustainable Development Goals is enhanced.**

50. The UNV Knowledge Portal on Volunteerism remained a key repository for volunteering data, consolidating information on laws, policies and volunteer modalities. The portal featured webinars and virtual discussions, and its accessibility features were enhanced for persons with disabilities.

51. The portal facilitates global knowledge sharing on volunteerism by publishing cutting-edge studies on how volunteers support countries in leaving no one behind. Among the new knowledge products supported by UNV are a report on volunteering in Central Asia highlighting the best practices of volunteering for sustainable development from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; and a joint analysis by the International Labour Organization and UNV on the gender aspects of volunteering and unpaid care work in lower-income countries.

<sup>4</sup> Governments of Australia, China, Czechia, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Norway, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, as well as the Agency for Volunteer Service of Hong Kong, Special Administrative Region of China, the Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology in India and King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi in Thailand

<sup>5</sup> [A/RES/79/226](#) (2024)

<sup>6</sup> [A/RES/79/148](#) (2024)

<sup>7</sup> Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kosovo UNSCR1244, Liberia, Mali, Panama, Paraguay, Sierra Leone, Uzbekistan

<sup>8</sup> Bahrain, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia, Ethiopia, Iraq, Namibia, Panama, Paraguay, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Ukraine

<sup>9</sup> Papua New Guinea, Madagascar, Guinea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia

<sup>10</sup> Bhutan

52. Preparations have started for the next edition of the State of the World's Volunteerism Report. UNV has partnered with two academic institutions in the Global South and the Global North—the University of Pretoria (South Africa) and the University of Northumbria (United Kingdom)—for research and analysis of volunteer work measurement, reflecting the value of volunteerism to individuals, communities and societies.

**Integration of data and evidence on volunteerism for the Sustainable Development Goals is strengthened among Member States and United Nations entities.**

53. Partnering with UNDP country offices, UNV provided data and evidence on volunteerism integration into national development plans: in Iraq, on lifelong education (Sustainable Development Goal 4) and good health (Sustainable Development Goal 3); in Liberia, on empowering youth with job skills (Sustainable Development Goal 8) and enhancing education (Sustainable Development Goal 4); and in Uganda, on emergency response (Sustainable Development Goal 13) and youth skills (Sustainable Development Goal 8).

## II. Adapting the UNV field presence

54. Decisions by the UNDP Governing Council in 1988 and 1990<sup>11</sup> authorized UNV to establish up to 60 programme officer posts within UNDP country offices, forming the foundation of the UNV field presence, which has remained in place ever since. Until 2017, UNV operated as a hub-and-spoke model, with field units staffed by international UN Volunteers reporting directly to UNV headquarters. A key priority of the 2017 UNV strategic and organizational transformation<sup>12</sup> was to revamp its field structure by institutionalizing programme officers, replacing international volunteers with national staff and establishing regional offices to provide direct oversight of programme officers at the country level. This structural transformation was accompanied by a business process realignment, effectively integrating regional offices and country-level field units. The regional offices have enabled UNV to deepen United Nations partnerships regionally, as well as to strengthen volunteer mobilization and duty of care in countries where there is no field presence.

55. The shift by UNV from a headquarters-centric model to an institution with empowered regional offices and field units has been recognized as a key driver of its organizational success in recent years.<sup>13</sup> The adaptive evolution of its field presence was closely aligned with Member States' guidance provided through quadrennial comprehensive policy reviews in 2016<sup>14</sup> and 2020,<sup>15</sup> ensuring that United Nations Volunteers are more responsive to the needs of programme countries, contribute to national capacity-building and support the integration of volunteerism into United Nations sustainable development cooperation frameworks.

56. As UNV has strengthened its organizational effectiveness and integrated United Nations Volunteers into more countries and United Nations entities, the number of volunteers has grown significantly, increasing by 33 per cent within the current Strategic Framework alone. This has resulted in a heavier workload for field units and staff. UNV has mitigated much of the increased workload through business process enhancements, digital transformation and the establishment of multi-country field units.<sup>16</sup> Some volunteer management functions have been de-concentrated, improving support for regional offices and field units and leading to the emergence of operational and multidisciplinary UNV hubs.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>11</sup> UNDP Governing Council decisions [88/46 of 1 July 1988](#) and [90/45 of 22 June 1990 \(E/1990/29\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> Ref. Chapter III of [United Nations Volunteers Report of the Administrator 2018 \(DP/2019/19\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> Ref. Chapter III of [United Nations Volunteers Report of the Administrator 2019 \(DP/2020/14\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> [A/RES/71/243](#) (2016)

<sup>15</sup> [A/RES/75/233](#) (2020)

<sup>16</sup> Pacific, Maghreb and Southern Africa

<sup>17</sup> These include, amongst others: Almaty, Kazakhstan; Bogotá, Colombia; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (co-located with the UNDP Global Shared Services Centre); and New Delhi, India

57. Building on recommendations from the mid-term review of the current Strategic Framework,<sup>18</sup> UNV conducted internal and external assessments of its field presence to inform further adjustments. These efforts aim to ensure UNV remains responsive to evolving United Nations system needs and is well-positioned for the successful implementation of its next Strategic Framework. Moving forward, UNV envisions:

- a. Further enhancing its field presence, aligning it with the needs of programme countries and United Nations country teams and effectively responding to the guidance of the 2024 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system<sup>19</sup> to increase the number of volunteers, in particular those from developing countries;
- b. Aligning its field presence with the needs of programme countries and United Nations partners;
- c. Further strengthening field units in contexts with sustained high needs to enhance support for the United Nations system and United Nations Volunteers;
- d. Investing in non-staff personnel to enable scalable responses to emergencies, including through close cooperation with United Nations agencies' crisis response mechanisms;
- e. Further improving business processes and systems to realize efficiencies in a sustained operation of scale;
- f. Investing in learning and professional development to support the most valuable asset UNV has—its dedicated and hardworking personnel worldwide.

### III. UNV in 2025

58. In the first three years of the current Strategic Framework, UNV mobilized more United Nations Volunteers than during the entire four-year cycle of the previous one (23,400 in 2022–2024 compared to 18,512 in 2018–2021). However, there is no room for complacency. In the final year of the Strategic Framework, UNV will focus on maintaining this positive momentum while addressing key areas for improvement, including accelerating the deployment of international United Nations Volunteers, diversifying the donor base of the Special Voluntary Fund and increasing the number of new knowledge products on volunteerism for the Sustainable Development Goals.

59. System-wide trends in volunteer mobilization observed from 2022 to 2024, such as sustained demand for national United Nations Volunteers, diversification of their roles at the country and community levels and higher emergency response turnover, were observed from 2022 to 2024. UNV expects these trends to continue in 2025. However, new funding constraints within the United Nations development system at the start of the year are likely to increase uncertainty and volatility in the operational environment. UNV will need to demonstrate greater resilience, stronger field-level engagement and enhanced agility to adapt effectively.

60. At the same time, UNV will focus on two critical forward-looking priorities. First, it will develop the next Strategic Framework (2026–2029) through a consultative process with Member States and United Nations partners. This process will integrate insights from the achievements of the current Strategic Framework as well as the findings and recommendations of its independent evaluation. Second, UNV will prepare to implement United Nations General Assembly resolution 78/127, which designates 2026 as the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development. In collaboration with Member States and United Nations entities, UNV will lead a global advocacy campaign to highlight the crucial role of volunteerism in advancing sustainable development.

<sup>18</sup> [United Nations Volunteers programme Annual Report of the Administrator 2023 \(DP/2024/23\)](#)

<sup>19</sup> [A/RES/79/226](#) (2024)