



UN VOLUNTEERS

Ethiopia

Issue #1 - 2020



EXCLUSIVE

**From UN Volunteer to
UNDP/AUC AYWL Fellow:
*My Journey So Far***

WOMEN'S MONTH SPECIAL

CHALTU DANIEL KALBESSA NARRATES HER FIRST MONTHS IN NEW YORK CITY



NINA TABINAEVA and DAEUN HAN, the UN Volunteers at the Resident Coordinator's Office



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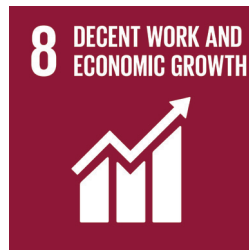
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UN VOLUNTEER EXPERT

Introducing the UN Expert Volunteer
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UN VOLUNTEERS *Ethiopia*

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UN VOLUNTEERS

Ethiopia

ABOUT US

The UN General Assembly created the UN Volunteers programme in 1970, with an initial mandate to provide qualified and motivated volunteers for the UN System in support of peace and development in operational countries.

The UN Volunteers programme contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide. We work with partners to integrate qualified, highly motivated and well supported volunteers into development programming and promote the value & global recognition of volunteerism.

The UN Volunteers programme is administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and reports to the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board.

The UN Volunteers programme now works to mobilize volunteers for the UN System and to advocate for the importance of volunteerism in development worldwide.

Over nearly five decades,

the scope of our mandate has expanded, driven by a constantly changing global environment and wider recognition of the value of volunteerism. A series of UN decisions now direct UN Volunteers activities and results to also focus on youth engagement and on demonstrating how integrating volunteering in peace and development projects and programmes can widen and deepen impact.

Changes in the development paradigm over the years also created a shift from international technical cooperation towards greater support for national and home-grown solutions, achieved by strengthening national and local capacities. Likewise, the growing vulnerability of communities due to exposure to recurrent natural disasters and conflict has demanded a much more robust humanitarian intervention globally. These trends are reflected in volunteer mobilization and programming for the Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs) and peacekeeping.

UNV and Development Assistance

Development assistance means enabling people to improve their lives in the long term. Development aid strives to address the underlying issues and socio-economic factors that impede human progress.

Around the world, UN volunteers help people lead more productive and fulfilling lives, such as through their work on projects in quality education and improved healthcare, or by ensuring equitable access to community resources and sustainable practices. UN Volunteers at times also work with governments and other local partners, helping to boost local capacity and augment knowledge.

UN Volunteers in Ethiopia

UN Volunteers Ethiopia provides support to the UN Country Team in Ethiopia in their delivery of development and humanitarian assistance in the country.

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTRY COORDINATOR



2020 is a significant year in so many respects both for the United Nations and the UN Volunteers programme. This year, the UN marks its 75th anniversary of pushing for peace and security; socio-economic development and fundamental human rights and freedoms everywhere. How do we plan on commemorating it? The only way we know how - by listening and doing more! We have stepped into a new decade and more importantly, the beginning of the countdown to deliver on the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and there is a sense of agreement globally, that more needs to be done

to move at the pace required to "deliver the goals by 2030". As a result, the UN Volunteers programme along with different partners are stepping up efforts to ensure there are tangible results at the finish line.

This year, we are reinforcing our National UN Volunteer (NUNV) programme with a focus on increasing the number of national volunteers mobilized. With this year expected to leave a mark in the form of free and fair elections, we are plugging into initiatives in support of the country's development ambitions.

The National UN Volunteers programme in Ethiopia exists to support the efforts of the UN and the government in actualizing development priorities through the mobilization of motivated and skilled nationals.

The UN Volunteers programme in Ethiopia is assisting the Ethiopian Government with the Supporting Elections for Ethiopia's Democratic

Strengthening (SEEDS) Project by recruiting 35 National Volunteers to be deployed across the country with the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE), an agency tasked with the administration of Ethiopia's elections. These volunteers recruited under ICT, Voter Education and Logistics will provide much needed support to the government in its delivery of credible elections.

Finally, as we move towards the actualization of our goals, we remember our successes of the previous year as a source of inspiration for even greater delivery this year.

To get involved and learn more about the UN Volunteers Programme, visit:

www.unv.org

Till next time!

Cheers!

SELAMAWIT TSIGE
UN VOLUNTEERS ETHIOPIA
COUNTRY COORDINATOR

THE UNV TEAM IN ETHIOPIA



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MEET THE UN VOLUNTEERS RCO TEAM!



The UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) leads the UNCT and provides strategic coordination support to the UNCT. Ethiopia is no different, with the RCO coordinating about 32 UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes in the country. The RCO is serving as the country-level hub for UN-wide partnership building supporting the host government.

Resident Coordinators are the designated representatives of the Secretary-General for development operations and this year, the UN Country Team in Ethiopia has

welcomed a new Resident Coordinator, Dr. Catherine Sozi to galvanise the UN's efforts in supporting Ethiopia's development priorities as well as accelerate progress being made towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Having taken necessary steps to position itself for a strong year, the Resident Coordinator's Office is on the move to deliver for Ethiopia and One UN.

The UN Volunteers programme is proud to have outstanding volunteers contributing to its success - Nina Tabinaeva from Russia



and DaEun Han from South Korea. We sat down with them to get a sense of where they stand as UN Volunteers in the office and their valuable contributions to the office and the UNCT.

UNV: Welcome ladies! Let's make the rounds with introductions, shall we?

Nina: Hi! Thanks a lot for inviting us to the interview. My name is Nina Tabinaeva and I am from Russia.

DaEun: And I'm DaEun Han from South Korea. Thanks for the opportunity to share

our diverse experiences in the Resident Coordinator's Office.

UNV: To start off, let's get a sense of what your roles entail?

Nina: I'm working in information management and DaEun - in programmes and operations support activities across the UNCT.

As an Information Management Specialist, I'm mainly involved with coordinating the development of two important strategic documents for the UN in Ethiopia - the





Common Country Analysis (CCA) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (CF). We have finalized the CF Outcomes and Outputs, which set the UN's priority areas of work and guide the overall joint UN programming for the next 5 years. The formulation of these outcomes and outputs is informed by the analysis of Ethiopia's development landscape conducted in the CCA report. As member of an inter-agency CF Drafting team, I am currently working on the narrative for some of the chapters of the CF.

UNV: Now to DaEun. So far, we know you are involved with the coordination of programmes and operations. Tell us more about that.

DaEun: As UN Programme and Operations Support Associate, I provide technical, administrative, and logistical support to the Operations Management Team (OMT) for the successful implementation and evaluation of the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) in Ethiopia as well as any technical assistance needed for programmes. The BOS demonstrates that common business operations are a critical enabler for effective delivery of UN development programmes. My role involves coordination between the Operations Management Team (OMT) and its 6 Working Groups. With these Working Groups, we make sure the BOS is aligned with programmatic priorities and support the CF and try to provide better quality and lower cost business operations. This is a new and exciting area for me as I had a different background before my role with the RCO.

UNV: Tell us more about that - your prior experience that is.

DaEun: Well, my career in international development kicked off at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris under the Division for Gender Equality in the Office of the Director General. Then I went on to join the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) where I was responsible for Partnerships and Fundraising. I also had a short stint at UNDP Ethiopia as a Peacebuilding Officer before joining the RCO towards the end of 2019.

UNV: The RCO, which was a part of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), was separated in 2019. In the words of UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed, the intention was about



NINA TABINAEVA
Information Management Specialist
Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO)

“becoming fit for purpose to carry the 2030 Agenda.” Now with new leadership, and a more independent role, what does that mean for the RCO in Ethiopia?

Nina: Oh, that’s a tough one. The whole system is still in a transition mode. So, it’s probably early to give an answer to this question. From my perspective, no dramatic change has occurred. We are still working closely with UNDP as well as other UN Entities. In my opinion, operational changes haven’t made a significant impact on our everyday work. We have just adjusted to new rules and operational arrangements.

DaEun: I agree with Nina’s points. In January 2019, a reinvigorated UN Resident Coordinator system was launched. 2019 has indeed marked the year of transition to roll out the changes in Ethiopia and globally. The Resident Coordinator is the highest-ranking representative of the UN development system at the country level and she is the designated representative of – and reports to – the Secretary-General. With these changes, we are here now to support and improve coordination between the UN agencies. We have an amazing new RC and I believe she can provide great leadership for UN Ethiopia in the time to come. I hope we can contribute to that, as it is so important for our partners – government, civil society and others – that they have One UN to relate to.

UNV: Apart from your primary responsibilities, are there any other activities you are involved with?

DaEun: Absolutely! Seeing how much the work of the RCO entails, we are engaged in additional activities. Some of the key activities in 2019 that were coordinated by the RCO include: the UN Career Fair, which attracted more than 1,500 youth participants, Harmonization of Local Consultants and Service Staff Rates, and promoting initiatives such as the Go Green Initiative.

Nina: In addition, I support colleagues from the RCO and different working groups with data visualization and graphic design. For example, I created infographics on election scenarios, an informative brochure for the Durable Solutions Initiative, a layout and implementation matrix for a Protection Cluster Strategy, and recently, motion graphics on the RCO’s main roles and functions. I was also an integral part of the 2019 UN Career Fair Taskforce and contributed with designing various communication materials.

DaEun: We also support various high-level missions.

UNV: Tell us a bit more about that. Any memorable moments?

DaEun: Although I was not coordinating the UN Deputy Secretary General Amina Mohammed’s visit to Ethiopia last year in October, it was definitely an eye-opening experience. The DSG gave clear guidance on the direction the UNCT needs to move forward as well as advice on the Common Country Analysis and UNSDCF. Her engagement with students who drew pictures under the theme of Women, Peace and Security was inspiring, stressing the importance of involving Youth as active participants to promote a culture of peacebuilding and non-violence.

I later had the opportunity of coordinating the UN Secretary General’s Visit to Ethiopia during the African Union Summit. It was an exciting experience as I had a chance to work with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) and the UN HQ Team, making sure programme and logistics arrangements are finalized before arrival. My main tasks stretched from managing the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator’s schedule to coordinating a meeting between the UN Country Team (UNCT) and the SG and his delegation ensuring all talking points and agenda are prepared. It was a notable experience

considering you get hands-on experience in managing high-level missions.

UNV: Nina?

Nina: For me, last year, I had the privilege of coordinating the high level visit of Her Majesty Queen Máxima of the Netherlands, the UN Secretary-General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development (UNSGSA) to Ethiopia. I was leading the preparations from the UN and oversaw coordination between multiple parties involved such as the Office of the UNSGSA in New York, the Royal House of the Netherlands, Embassy of the Netherlands in Ethiopia, and UNECA. Prior to the actual visit I have spent several days with Her Majesty's personal team from the Royal House planning all the details of the mission. That was a truly exclusive experience.

UNV: Next, I'd like us to talk a little bit about something affecting us all - Coronavirus Outbreak (COVID-19) which started in late 2019. The World Health Organization (WHO) in March 2020, labelled the virus as a pandemic.

Now with hundreds of thousands of cases reported globally and a spike in cases in Africa, the UN family around the world and governments have put in place several measures to curtail the spread of the virus.

Ethiopia reported its first coronavirus case in March 2020 and other cases after that. How has the outbreak affected UN-related activities in the country?

Nina: Now more than ever, the country needs UN's support in ensuring this doesn't impede upon development gains. What this means is that the UN will continue to support refugees, migrants, women, children, the economy as well as the overall response to the outbreak in the country.

The UN remains at the service of its partners. Agencies have activated their Business Continuity Plans (BCP) including

alternate working arrangements with the use of different approaches and technologies in consideration of staff safety and security to ensure Ethiopia is fully supported during this trying time.

DaEun: The RCO has been working closely with the World Health Organization and the United Nations Health Care Centre (UNHCC) in finalizing the Contingency Plan for COVID-19 and we cannot forget the support of all UN Agencies in nominating staff for the COVID-19 Taskforce. The Government of Ethiopia has also requested for UN's support and the RC/HC as well as the whole UNCT is committed to providing needed support.

UNV: Not many people will ask you this but how are you doing?

Nina: Obviously with what's going on around the world, there is a tendency to worry particularly when you have friends and family in different parts of the world. I talk to them frequently and try to make sure they abide to WHO guidelines and government instructions. A lot has changed in the way we work but we have adjusted to the new arrangements for the safety of ourselves and others.

DaEun: I agree with Nina on this point... I would say that the situation has changed our working modalities and if you look at it on the bright side, it has stressed the importance of having flexible work arrangements as well as paying more attention to our health including our mental health.

UNV: Thank you for taking time off what has been an intense few months for you both, it's been a pleasure to learn about your involvement with the RCO and we hope to hear more from you in the future.

DaEun: Thank you so much for having us and for the opportunity to share about RCO!

Nina: Many thanks, indeed. It was a pleasure talking to you.

This interview was completed on the 24th of March 2020

A portrait of Daeun Han, a young woman with long, dark, wavy hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a light-colored, textured top under a brown, ribbed cardigan with large buttons. Her right hand is on her hip. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with green trees and a clear sky.

DAEUN HAN

UN Programme and Operations Support
Associate

Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO)

A portrait of Lisa Laskaridis, a woman with long blonde hair and blue eyes, wearing a black blazer over a white top. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera.

5 Questions

with Lisa Laskaridis

In commemoration of the United Nation's 75th anniversary, "UN75" has been launched to build a more sustainable future TOGETHER. A cornerstone of this campaign is to have the "biggest ever global conversation on the world's future" with concerns and propositions being relayed directly to the Secretary-General. The UN Volunteers programme is keying into this by mobilizing volunteers around the world who will work on promoting participation and discourse on UN75. Lisa Laskaridis, Public Information Officer for the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for UN75, joins us from the UN Headquarters in New York to answer "5 Questions" on UN75.

1 What was the motivation behind the launch of the UN75 Campaign?

The Secretary-General has chosen not to see the 75th anniversary as a 'birthday party,' but as a chance to engage global citizens in conversations on how global cooperation can better serve their needs. We have entered a period of great uncertainty and global trends that will have a significant impact on our common future. These include threats to the sustainability of our planet and our livelihoods, the climate crisis, new forms of violence and conflict, rapid changes in demography - such as urbanization, youth bulges and ageing populations, growing

inequalities, and the disruptive effects of new technologies.

These issues cannot be addressed by one country alone. However, at a time when we need collective action more than ever, support for global cooperation is flagging. Popular discontent is on the rise, public trust is in decline and relations between countries are under strain. Dialogue – and action – on global issues could not be more urgent.

2 Is UN75 merely the celebration of the UN's 75th anniversary?

Not at all. The UN75 initiative is all about listening, and to invite and encourage people around the world to have **their** say about the future **they** want. We want to reach out to the global public; to listen to their hopes and fears; and to learn from their experiences. We want ideas and solutions for how the UN can stay relevant and equipped to manage the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Working with partners across the world, we will support dialogues across borders, regions and generations. We will place special emphasis on youth and marginalized communities, as well as those who don't or cannot normally engage with the UN. But we want to reach people from all communities and walks of life.

3 What can we do?

UN75 is the world's biggest-ever conversation on global cooperation and the future we want – and we want to hear from YOU! Here are a few ways you can join the conversation:

- i. Take our 1-minute survey which can be found at www.un75.online and share it with your friends and networks. Here you can also send your advice to the Secretary-General!
- ii. You can also organise a UN75 dialogue, within your community, with your friends or colleagues. We have created a 'dialogue toolkit' which can be found at www.un.org/un75 with advice and guidelines on how to go about this.
- iii. Finally, we would love to know all about

your UN75 activities! Please post on social media with the hashtag #UN75 for us to share. You can also send us photos and videos of your activities to un75@un.org and we will highlight on the UN75 platforms.

4 Will our inputs truly matter?

Yes! Your views and ideas will be presented to world leaders and senior UN officials at a high-profile event at the 75th UNGA on 21 September 2020, as well as disseminated online and through partners on an ongoing basis. The objective is to stimulate longer-term discussion – and action – on reinvigorating global cooperation and on solutions to the major challenges facing the world.

5 What happens after 2020 when the conversation is over?

Throughout the initiative, UN75 will publicise actions that can be taken by individuals and groups to support the future we want. We also hope that those who participate in UN75 will continue to engage with the United Nations beyond 2020, and that the partnerships built will become sustainable, helping to take forward collective action.

Doesn't this all sound exciting? We look forward to hearing your ideas! Join the conversation. Be the change!

Thank you very much for having me, and for listening.

UNV: Special thanks to Lisa Laskaridis for joining us from the UN Headquarters.



Do follow @JoinUN75 on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube to stay up to date with all the inspiring UN75 activities all around the world.

TOMAS KRAL
Programme Assistant
UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa



Transitioning From Agricultural Economics To Preventing Violent Extremism

My name is Tomas Kral and I've been serving as a UN Volunteer at the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa since March 2019. As a Programme Assistant, I work on Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa, a regional project.

Before UNDP, I worked at the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the European Union in Brussels, Belgium - working closely with the Agriculture and Environment Unit and engaging with the EU's Task Force Rural Africa. This provided me with development experience in an agricultural context.

As a recent graduate and practitioner in the field of Agricultural Economics, it has been a challenging yet compelling transition to dive into the approaches to prevent violent extremism (PVE).

Upon joining the Regional PVE team in Addis, I was briefed about the ongoing projects and activities the Project team had engaged in and I was formally introduced to UNDP colleagues in the focus countries.

The PVE Project stands at the forefront of shaping understandings and framing conversations about preventing and responding to violent extremism in Africa. It has spearheaded an innovative and evidence-based development approach to PVE that has significantly contributed to changing the way governments conceptualise violent extremism as a problem and PVE as an approach. Its engagement through collaborative and inclusive partnerships with country offices and governments in 18 countries, regional bodies, civil society and others across the continent has enabled the emergence of nationally- and regionally-owned solutions to violent extremism that are evidence-based and helped actualise a government and society-wide approach.

As part of my assignment, I provide ad-hoc support, communicate with UNDP focal points in the focus countries and contribute to the development of several research projects, including leading the redesign of the survey for the second phase of Journey to Extremism in Africa study and guiding the creation of a web-based virtual platform that depicts how life under AL-Shabab has been experienced by local communities, with focus on women and girls, living in communities under the group's territorial control. The virtual platform aims to provide PVE-practitioners with a nuanced and evidence-based background on the diversity of roles of women in AL-Shabab's organizational structure to better inform gendered interventions. The aesthetic and interactive nature of these animated stories is a useful tool particularly for practitioners that directly work with the target group of women at risk of recruitment by AL-Shabab.

To enable and facilitate peer-to-peer learning among UNDP colleagues working in the PVE field, in 2019, we established a Community of Practice and initiated the development of PVE Quarterly Newsletters to highlight PVE activities and projects on the continent.

Finally, I would like to highlight the activities of a Learning Committee that was established at the UNDP Regional Service Centre with great support from other UN Volunteers. Our objective is to create a space for mutual learning and promote the professional development of staff at all levels through different events and programmes.

I am honoured to continue my UN Volunteers experience in Ethiopia in 2020 - to follow my passion and contribute my time, skills & knowledge to create a significant force and have a positive impact on people living in at-risk communities on the continent!

WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE PART OF REFUGEE STATUS DETERMINATION

Burdens & Medals

BY URVASHI BUNDEL WITH UGOCHUKWU KINGSLEY AHUCHAOGU

Urvashi joined the UN Volunteer programme in 2019 as an Associate Refugee Status Determination Officer at the UNHCR Assosa Sub-Office. She has prior UNHCR experience in Egypt with an extensive academic background that includes qualifications from the prestigious Johns Hopkins University (Washington DC, USA), Grotius Center of Legal Studies, Leiden University (The Hague, Netherlands), Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (Japan) and Melbourne Law School, University of Melbourne (Australia).

Identity, to me, is what we mean when we introduce ourselves to the next person with our nationality, hometown, village, race, religion, family and more. But now imagine, if that very identity was consistently challenged only because you were forced to flee your place of origin due to unfavourable circumstances like war, political unrest, and climate change. This is what a refugee comprises of.

Refugees are seeking back their identity with dignity and I am grateful to be serving that cause.

I have always been eager to work in the field of international criminal justice, encompassing refugees and international protection themes. With generous support from UN Volunteers, UNHCR and the Ethiopian government's active collaboration, I am currently

engaged in the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) operation in Benishangul-Gumuz Region, with a prime focus on the oldest and demographically most diverse refugee camp of Sherkole.

I am responsible for conducting RSD interviews to determine eligibility for refugee status, undertaking country of origin (COI) and other research related to the claim, as required, and drafting RSD assessments, including complex cases. I am tasked with providing legal and procedural guidance and coaching as well as participate in decisions regarding appropriate RSD case management strategies. Working for refugees is a complex task particularly in the Benishangul-Gumuz Region which covers 5 refugee camps and is home to diverse refugees.

According to UNHCR's Benishangul-Gumuz regional situational update of January 2020, Benishangul-Gumuz was home to 62,559 persons of concern with a large majority of them being of either South Sudanese or Sudanese descent. Through my RSD assignment in the region, I support the operation in conducting RSD activities with a specific focus on Sherkole by developing and implementing RSD training, including for Government authorities and other partners, as well as other measures to enhance the quality and efficiency of RSD decision-making and provide technical advice to strengthen national asylum procedures.

RSD unlike most other protection operations of UNHCR remains the cornerstone of the agency as it exercises the active

Refugees are seeking back their identity with dignity and I am grateful to be serving that cause.

implementation of its 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol. In short, the work of RSD entails both investigative interviewing and updated knowledge of the socio-political situation of the country in question. Hence, it is not uncommon to be overwhelmed by the mere scale of the complexity of tasks at hand or experience compassion fatigue, it is also easy to overlook the resources that might be available to us; the ideal situation would be to make sure all stakeholders work in tandem. I often like to remember a famous quote at the back of my head, The Greatest Obstacle to Discovery Is Not Ignorance—It is the Illusion of Knowledge! This keeps me grounded and searching for better ways to serve the population of concern.







CHALTU DANIEL KALBESSA

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With a global consensus for greater representation of females in the workplace particularly youth, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the African Union Commission (AUC) came together to take a step in that direction.

The AUC-UNDP African Young Women Leaders Fellowship Programme was launched in 2019 to integrate young women into development programming particularly to advance the global and continental development agendas - the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063. After receiving close to 6,000 applications and a rigorous vetting

process, 20 young, inspiring females with a can-do attitude were selected.

15 locations from the UNDP Regional Offices, Country Offices and UNDP Headquarters in New York were chosen to host these 20 outstanding young female leaders from Africa to champion the cause of development globally.

Chaltu Daniel Kalbessa, a former UN Volunteer at the UNDP Ethiopia Country Office was selected from Ethiopia as one of five to be stationed at the UNDP Headquarters in New York.

Follow along as she narrates her inspiring journey:

“No matter where you are from, your dreams are valid,” a quote that sums up my whole experience and reflects my journey so far. If I had to describe myself with one word, then I would say “Dreamer”.



I'm a girl from a small village but with a big dream. The inspiration for my big dream stems from my curiosity to discover the root of development issues around me and see a bigger picture beyond my small town. That's why I decided to study and expand my professional horizon in economics and development policy.

Being one of the 20 AUC-UNDP African Young Women Leaders Fellows and working with the Regional Bureau for Africa at the UNDP headquarters in New York is a dream come true. I remember the day I got the congratulatory email; It was on a Friday after a tiring work weekday. I was waiting for a train to get home. I got an email notification which read “you have now been selected for the AUC-UNDP African Young Women Leaders Fellowship Programme and we are considering you for a position in New York, USA”. I screamed out of excitement and people kept staring at me at the train station. On my way home, I kept thinking of the whole journey - the power of vision and believing in the process especially in oneself. Before my current assignment, I was working as a National UN Volunteer at UNDP Ethiopia, where I got insightful lessons and on-hand experience on

development issues in my country. I had the opportunity to meet and work with other dynamic UN Volunteers from different corners of the globe as well as senior management and experts, which helped me build networks and friendships that I will keep dearly.

Being a UN Volunteer was such a milestone for my personal and career development. Starting from my previous experience as an intern and volunteer at UNDP Ethiopia to my current experience as a fellow at UNDP New York, I would describe UNDP as home to my career growth, a bridge to my dream and my dream “ENABLER”. My dream is to become a development expert and UNDP has continued to enable me to discover my potential and realize my dream by providing me with a platform to work directly on development issues.

As an African Young Women Leader Fellow, working in the strategy, analysis and research team with senior experts on development issues concerning Africa has been a fulfilling experience. I'm excited to learn more about developing technical skills on solution-oriented research, policy & strategy plan formulation and field mission work. I am so excited to learn more about operations management at the headquarters as it's a very new learning opportunity for me as well.

Finally, I want young people especially young women to know that they can be anything they want. I want them to know that there is space for us in this big world for growth and impact.

It's all about believing in yourself and seizing opportunities.



TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE - A Joint Responsibility

Climate change is a long-term change in the earth's weather patterns caused by greenhouse gas emissions. It involves changes in temperature, precipitation, or wind patterns, that occur over several decades or longer. It impacts our ecosystem, public health, food security, water resources, human settlement, and socio-economic development.

The Paris Agreement on climate action was developed in 2015 as a response to climate change posed challenges. Key aspects of the Paris Agreement seek to meet climate targets through mitigative actions which aim to reduce global warming through low-carbon development & adaptation - adjustment to a changing climatic effect.

At large, it suggests a transitioning to low-carbon, resource-efficient and inclusive green economies - a transition that challenges our production and consumption patterns. This requires actions and significant technological, behavioural and systemic change at all levels of the society.

Ethiopia is one of the countries most affected by climate change often felt in the form of flooding, drought and food insecurity due to higher temperatures, reduced rainfall, and changes in precipitation. This is a key threat to low income and agriculture-based economies like Ethiopia. According to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), 85% of land in Ethiopia is degraded which is exacerbated by climate change effects.

Ethiopia has a vision of achieving lower-middle-income status by 2025 through economic growth, net-zero emission, and climate resilience.

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Addis Ababa Liaison Office (AALO) was established in 2001 as an outpost of the Africa Office. UNEP AALO represents UNEP at the headquarters of the African Union (AU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), as well as at country level. UNEP AALO seeks to improve institutional, systemic and

individual capacity on the resolution of natural resource-related conflicts for peace and security. It also supports ecosystem management in the country, for example, the development of Ethiopia's National 10-year forest sector development roadmap.

Under the Resource Efficiency Programme, one of the focus areas of UNEP - where I am mainly engaged in, we actively support the country through the Switch Africa Green (SAG) Programme, a regional programme implemented in seven African countries. The EU funded SAG Programme is managed by UNEP and the EU delegation in Ethiopia with regards to strengthening Ethiopia's effort in transitioning into an inclusive, green and sustainable economy based on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) patterns and practices that contribute to green job creation and poverty reduction. Studies revealed that shifting investments to green initiatives, resulted in increased long-run GDP growth and higher inclusive wealth.

The SAG programme promotes green investment to achieve the country's development priorities as it has a potential of resulting in a sustainable, inclusive and transformative economy.

As national coordinator, I liaise with multi-stakeholders, including the implementing institution - Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission (EFCCC) and coordinate partnerships within multi-stakeholder settings. Through policy support and networking components of the Programme, I facilitate and support the identification of policy strengths and/or gaps in terms of enabling green investment development in Ethiopia in three nationally prioritized sectors, such as Agriculture, Manufacturing and Integrated Waste Management. The aim is to create the right environment for micro, small and medium enterprises to be able to green their business through resource-efficient ways of production based on sustainable consumption and production patterns. I also oversee coordination among key

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implementing partners of the programme. Further to this, through the networking facility – the project aims to work with different multilateral and bilateral development partners for synergy, as well as sharing knowledge generated through the project among beneficiaries, sectors and at the broader scale of regional level for policy uptake and replication.

As much as the effects of climate change are immense, awareness of the issues don't measure up. Responding to a key threat of our time requires commitment and

shouldn't be left for policymakers alone.

What can we do:

Change often starts with a change in mindsets and with climate change, it's no different. With knowledge of the issues, comes responsible and accountable action. Some simple ways to get involved include:

- Cut down on plastic use
- Utilize energy & water wisely
- Switch to locally produced food
- Promote tree planting

Together, we can slow down the drastic effects of climate change!

In 2019, the UN Volunteers programme introduced the UN Expert Volunteer category aimed at availing highly experienced professionals (individuals with more than 10 years of experience) to UN Agencies to help deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UN Volunteers office in Ethiopia keyed into this and recruited its first-ever UN Expert Volunteer - Talent Mbizvo.

With almost one year under his belt at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), he shares his experience so far:

My UN Volunteers journey began with a record as I became the first UN Volunteer deployed to ECA and the first International Volunteer recruited under the UN Volunteers Expert Modality in Ethiopia. Leaving Zimbabwe to work in another country for the first time took some courage. I had to part with my beloved family and resign from a permanent job. Despite this, I landed in Addis Ababa and was welcomed by very different weather which I was ill-prepared for. It was raining and extremely cold and I neither brought an umbrella nor a warm jersey - so my first moments were quite difficult. The suits I brought were not useful since I needed casual wear that would allow me to walk around and mingle with locals without raising eyebrows that I am a newbie.

Suddenly after a short while, I seem to have adjusted to most parts of the city. The weather feels cool and reassuring; the food is good and relatively affordable. However, accommodation is quite expensive though basic amenities like electricity and water are affordable and often available. So I would say I've managed to settle down and balance well. My family, after months

apart have joined me, and all is going well. We enjoy shopping, taking walks and tours to cultural sites which Ethiopia is rich in. We have since visited the old theatre at Churchill road. The fact that the Emperor used to watch performances in the 1970s in the old building thrilled us.

Pertaining to what I do? I serve as a Conference ICT Systems Project Manager under the Information and Communications Technology Services Section (ICTSS) of the Public Information and Knowledge Management Division (PIKMD). It sounds like a mouthful but after some time, one gets used to it.

My job responsibilities cover different aspects. This includes the technical aspect of project management - risk management, project estimation, quality management and project scheduling. While another layer involves leveraging on my soft skills in ensuring project deliverables are met. I am responsible for facilitating audio and video infrastructure upgrades for the United Nations Conference Centre and contribute to procurement and logistical arrangements for short term goals.

My experience so far has also involved me dedicating time to learning and picking up new skills. I am currently undergoing a French class (hopefully by the time it's done I'll be able to say more than bonjour). I have had the opportunity to work with people from diverse backgrounds and managing virtual teams. This has largely helped me develop strong interpersonal skills - crucial when working in a multicultural environment.

I look forward to furthering my technical skills as well as improving my leadership and strategic qualities. I also hope to leave a mark of successfully implementing video and audio upgrades at ECA.

TALENT MBIZVO

Conference ICT Systems Project Manager
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CREDITS

United Nations Volunteers (UNV)

United Nations Volunteers East and Southern Africa Regional Office (UNV ESARO)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG)

UN Ethiopia

World Health Organization (WHO)

UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)



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