



Press Release

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INDIANS AMONGST WINNERS OF UNV ONLINE VOLUNTEERING AWARD 2010

New Delhi, 03 December 2010 – Home to one of the largest operations of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Programme in the world, the Indian voluntary sector has taken the lead in supporting government and civil-society initiatives aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and has now made its presence felt in the cyber world as well.

Six Indians are among the winners of the UNV Online Volunteering Award 2010 awarded for contributions towards achieving the MDGs. The awards are hosted by the German Positive Nett-Works Association, an online platform of exemplary change initiatives, solutions and tools to address development issues and were announced on the eve of the International Volunteers Day which is observed globally on 05 December each year.

Recognizing the importance of volunteerism, United Nations Resident Coordinator Patrice Coeur-Bizot said: "India's voluntary sector has a formidable challenge and at the same time fantastic opportunities ahead. If India does not achieve the MDGs, the world will not. The mobilization of volunteers from all walks of life can help accelerating progress towards achieving the MDGs before the 2015 deadline." Congratulating the winners of the awards, he added that the youth of India can and are playing a critical role.

According to a study by Johns Hopkins University, each year volunteers contribute USD400 billion to the global economy. Flavia Pansieri, UNV Executive Coordinator, says: "Volunteers are making the Goals happen, and in places where the Goals are off-target, volunteerism, if supported and managed well, could help turn situations around."

Across India, UNV volunteers have focused on the marginalized and disadvantaged particularly through supporting local government efforts to address social exclusion in planning processes; mobilizing people to recognize the importance of the MDGs; and to rollout a Right to Information campaign in Odisha which aimed to raise awareness on MDGs. The UN will commemorate the International Volunteers Day by organizing a photo exhibition focusing on volunteering for the MDGs which will be inaugurated on Saturday by Sam Sharpe, Head of DFID-India, at the UN Office in the national capital. The event is jointly organized by Skillshare International, UNV and the UN Information Centre.

UNV has also partnered with a number of organizations in India including Times Foundation, WILPF, VSO, IEEE, Joining Hand, WWF, WAYE, CYSD, Bakul Foundation, Tatapower, etc., for various events to mark the day across India.

For those wanting to join the celebrations, the UNV has launched the 'Share the Story Campaign' which is a 24-hour online film festival. UNV will also launch IYV+10 to mark 2011 as the International Year of Volunteer 10th Anniversary in New York on 05 December.



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For more information:

<http://www.unv.org/>

www.facebook.com/unvolunteers

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About UNV

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that promotes volunteerism to support peace and development worldwide. UNV volunteers work in more than 130 countries around the world. Last year, 7,545 UNV volunteers from 154 countries contributed their skills towards to the work of 20 United Nations organizations, 17 UN Missions, and many local institutions. In India UNV volunteers are working with various UN agencies for various projects contributing to the MDGs that focuses on marginalised and disadvantaged communities.