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Press Release

Volunteerism: key to achieve Millennium Development Goals

New Delhi, 9 August 2011: “The willingness and ability of citizens to give freely their time out of a sense of solidarity will have a major influence on the extent to which the MDGs are attained and sustained” noted Ms Alexandra Solovieva, Deputy Country Director (Programme), United Nations Development Programme.

She was speaking at the opening of a seminar on Youth Volunteerism held at United Nations Conference Hall today. The seminar was jointly organized by the Commonwealth Youth Programme, Asia Center, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, and United Nations Volunteers.

This year marks the conclusion of the International Year of Youth, and observance of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10), first observed in 2001 as per a mandate given by the UN General Assembly with the objective to enhance the recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion of volunteer service. The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Programme was designated as the international focal point.

IYV+10 will be marked by celebrations and activities on a global, regional and national level by Volunteer Involving Organizations, Governments, UN agencies, Foundations and other Stakeholders. IYV+10 India campaign functions under the leadership of National Committee for IYV+10. The Committee is comprised of 14 members from diverse organizations and is chaired by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Planning Commission and UNDP.

The aim of the seminar was to sensitize all stakeholders, including young people themselves, about their role in fostering an environment of dialogue and understanding and a spirit of volunteerism; create an enabling environment for young people to address their issues, needs and concerns including their meaningful engagement in decision making and the nation building process. The participants included policy makers; non-governmental organizations working for young people and active youth leaders.

Speaking further on the occasion Ms Alexandra remarked “Volunteers work amongst communities, which otherwise may be forgotten or neglected due to their disadvantaged status. Recognizing volunteers’ contribution— whether expressed as volunteer service, mutual aid, self-help, campaigning or other forms of voluntary participation — is the first step towards harnessing this vast resource in a global effort to achieve the MDG targets.”

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