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United Nations Volunteers

United Nations Volunteers

Report of the Administrator

Summary

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme provides motivated and skilled global citizens with an opportunity to volunteer within the United Nations system. This report presents UNV performance in 2019 and the midterm review of the Strategic Framework, 2018-2021 (DP/2018/6). The report reflects on the organizational transformation of UNV, sets forth proposed adjustments in its results matrix, and highlights priorities for 2020 and the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals.

Six annexes, posted on the Executive Board website, complement this report: (a) United Nations entities hosting United Nations Volunteers; (b) statistical overview, 2019; (c) financial overview; (d) annual performance indicators, 2019; (e) midterm performance indicators, and (f) results matrix: compendium of proposed adjustments based on midterm review.

Elements of a decision

The Executive Board may wish to: (a) take note of the results achieved by UNV in 2019 as reflected in the report of the Administrator; (b) express appreciation to all United Nations Volunteers for their outstanding contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during 2019; (c) approve the proposed adjustments to the results framework for the Strategic Framework, as outlined in annex 6; (d) reaffirm the crucial role of the Special Voluntary Fund in delivering the UNV Strategic Framework, 2018-2021, and call upon all development partners in a position to do so to contribute to the Fund; (e) commend UNV for the results achieved through the organizational transformation and during the first two years of the Strategic Framework, 2018-2021, as highlighted in the midterm review; and (f) request that UNV continue to build on the progress made in pursuing innovative volunteer solutions that enable the United Nations system to accelerate its contributions to the 2030 Agenda.

* Reissued owing to the impact of COVID-19 on meetings.



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I. Introduction

1. In accordance with Executive Board decision 2018/8, this is the second annual report of UNV. The report covers UNV organizational performance in 2019 in the context of its Strategic Framework, 2018-2021. Chapter II presents the annual results, based on inputs from external and internal sources, reports and financial data and, where possible, primary data to measure progress against the results matrix. Chapter III summarizes the findings of the midterm review of the Strategic Framework, and Chapter IV outlines the way forward.



II. Highlights of results, 2019

2. In accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/13, this chapter is aligned with the UNV Strategic Framework results matrix. Annex 4 provides further data on baselines, targets and performance.

3. The outcome and output indicator performance for 2019 have been documented as follows:

- (a) Green  (performance is 100 per cent, or above, of the strategic framework milestone), 9 indicators rated as meeting or exceeding expectations;
- (b) Amber  (performance is between 60 and 99 per cent of the strategic framework milestone), 5 indicators rated as below expectations;
- (c) Red  (performance is below 60 per cent of the strategic framework milestone), no indicators rated as not meeting expectations;
- (d) Grey  (data not available) no indicators for which data is unavailable.

A. Outcome 1. The efforts of Member States to deliver on the 2030 Agenda are supported through volunteerism as an effective means of implementation and people engagement.

Outcome indicator	2019 targets	2019 results	Score (%)	Performance
1.1 Percentage of countries reporting a positive contribution of volunteerism to the Sustainable Development Goals in voluntary national reports on progress towards the Goals	45%	53%	118%	 (green)
1.2 Number of other volunteers mobilized in regional/national volunteer schemes supported by UNV	147,500	493,811	335%	 (green)

4. UNV promotes the integration of volunteerism into national and global strategies as a means to implement the 2030 Agenda and, upon request, engages with Member States on their voluntary national reviews of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In that context, of 47 voluntary national reviews presented during the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2019, 28 recognized the contributions of volunteering to the Sustainable Development Goals.¹

5. Member States reflected on the role of volunteering in their 2019 voluntary national reviews in two ways:

- (a) *Volunteers as critical partners for innovation and inclusion.* Cambodia noted the role of 3,600 volunteer doctors in providing medical services to 240,000 people who would



¹ The following countries recognized volunteerism in their voluntary national reviews: Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, **Cambodia**, **Cameroon**, Central African Republic, **Chile**, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Fiji, **Ghana**, Guatemala, Guyana, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Kazakhstan, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Turkey and the United Kingdom (countries in bold reported a distinct positive contribution of volunteerism to the Sustainable Development Goals).

otherwise not have access to such services. In Turkey, the ‘My Sister’ project, involving volunteer trainers, empowers women to participate in economic life by equipping them with knowledge and skills; 11,429 women, including 537 refugee women, were trained in financial awareness, communication, information technologies and entrepreneurship. In Guyana, Civil Defence Commission volunteers were trained for effective post-disaster needs assessment. Lesotho recognized the role of volunteers in promoting broader national ownership, a human rights-based approach, gender equality, participation, inclusion and sustainability. Iraq is aiming to integrate volunteerism into development planning processes.

(b) *Widening citizen participation in data collection, consultation and validation of results.* In Sierra Leone, a civil society platform integrates volunteers who contribute to data collection, validation and consultation in remote local communities. In Pakistan, volunteer youth ambassadors were trained to sensitize communities on the Sustainable Development Goals, while academic institutions are supporting university students to conduct research on Goal priorities. In Chile, a national network of volunteers is integrating the Goals into plans and programmes in five regions. In New Zealand, the volunteer-run ‘Narrative Imperative’ initiative provides a platform for people to engage with the Goals, extending the conversation beyond government policy advisors. Kazakhstan refers to the role of volunteering and community work in promoting a culture of citizenship and social responsibility.

6. A total of 493,811 local non-United Nations volunteers were engaged in 2019 through national and regional schemes supported by UNV in Cameroon, Cambodia, China, Guinea, India, Sri Lanka, Uganda, and through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Noteworthy examples included 463,140 volunteers in India, under the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan and National Service Scheme programmes for youth engagement, and 19,000 volunteers to support the Pan American and Parapan American Games in Peru.

Output 1.1. Member States are supported in developing programmes, policies and legislation that promote volunteerism and volunteer action.

Output indicator	2019 targets	2019 results	Score (%)	Performance
1.1.1 Number of volunteer schemes (online, on-site, regional, national, subregional, youth) supported by UNV	13	11	85%	 (amber)
1.1.2 Number of Member States partnering with UNV to develop policies and legislation on volunteerism	4	5	125%	 (green)

7. In accordance with its Strategic Framework, 2018-2021, UNV provides technical assistance to Member States on integrating volunteering into their efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

8. In 2019, UNV provided technical and knowledge support to develop policies and legislation of volunteerism in Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Sri Lanka, and Uganda. As a result, a bill for the creation of a national agency on volunteerism was adopted in Cameroon and a national policy on volunteerism was approved in Sri Lanka, while a similar policy is in the final stages of consultation in Guinea Bissau.

9. During the year UNV focused its technical expertise on institutional strengthening for volunteerism in Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Côte d’Ivoire, Ecuador, Egypt, Guinea Bissau, India, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Morocco, Sri Lanka, Turkey, and Uganda, and on regional capacity development for ECOWAS.

(a) *At the country level*, UNV supported the National Volunteer Service in Côte d’Ivoire, which came into effect with passage by the National Assembly and the Senate of a law on civic service incorporating volunteerism. In Ecuador, UNV supported the establishment of the Ecuadorian Volunteering Network, an innovative open space for

the participation and inclusion of all national and international organizations that contribute to sustainable development through volunteering. In Tunisia, UNV and partners provided training on volunteerism in all 24 governorates of the country. In Kazakhstan, UNV collaborated with the Government on an action plan for the national Year of Volunteering, 2020, and in Turkey it supported the integration of a national volunteering infrastructure into the 11th National Development Plan. In Morocco, UNV and UNDP worked with the Ministry of Youth and Sports on a study to engage youth volunteers on the national priorities of social cohesion, migration and unemployment, while in Egypt UNV supported the development of a national manual on volunteerism, covering volunteer management, rights and obligations.



(b) *At the regional level*, UNV continued to support the ECOWAS Volunteer Programme, through which volunteers from 13 ECOWAS Member States supported Burkina Faso, Liberia and Sierra Leone in the areas of education, health, youth, project management, communication, and monitoring and evaluation. In the Arab region, UNV and UNFPA contributed to the development of a regional strategy on volunteerism by the League of Arab States (currently under consultation). In Latin America and the Caribbean, UNV supported the volunteer programme for the Pan American and Parapan American Games, and the establishment of the first national volunteer platform in Peru.

(c) *South-South cooperation*. UNV partnered with the China Soong Ching Ling Foundation on the development of the International Platform for Volunteer Service Training and Exchange for Youth, which convened its first United Nations youth volunteer training in late 2019. In Cambodia, UNV, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation implemented a project under the India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation that is increasing the ability of Cambodian youth to build their skills through volunteerism to find decent work. The project received volunteers from China, India, the Republic of Korea, and Thailand, and has mobilized more than 1,450 Cambodian volunteers locally to build their capacity in communication, problem solving, teamwork, presentation, leadership, time management and resource mobilization.

10. In 2019, more Member States sought UNV advisory services to develop enabling policies and legislation on volunteerism to help to reach scaled national results. This resulted in overachievement of the relevant Strategic Framework target by 25 per cent. By contrast, since the organization has moved away from the implementation of stand-alone projects, there has been a decline in the number of direct interventions to support specific volunteer schemes. This led to the underachievement of that target by 15 per cent in 2019.

11. Going forward, in 2020 UNV will establish an expert roster for on-demand support to Member States. It will also conduct a critical analysis of the impact on the 2030 Agenda of an enabling environment for volunteerism, in order to strengthen its advisory services to Member States.

Output 1.2. Promotion of volunteerism and its value is advanced through engagement of Member States, civil society, and academia, in research, public dialogue, documentation and dissemination.

Output indicator	2019 targets	2019 results	Score (%)	Performance
1.2.1 Number of Member States contributing research and knowledge products to the plan of action	13	8	62%	 (amber)
1.2.2 Number of plan-of-action partners engaged in technical meetings and consultations at global and national levels	75	87	116%	 (green)

12. The Plan of Action to Integrate Volunteerism into the 2030 Agenda² calls upon Member States, United Nations entities, civil society, academia and the private sector to enhance the recognition and integration of volunteerism as a powerful means of implementation and to build evidence for the Global Technical Meeting on Volunteerism in 2020. To that end, in partnership with the United Nations Regional Economic Commissions, UNV convened five regional consultations in 2019 concurrently with the annual regional forums on sustainable development.

13. Across the regions, stakeholders confirmed that volunteerism is relevant to solving a wide range of development issues, ranging from planning to implementation. At the same time, the enabling environment for volunteering, gaps and challenges varied by regional context.

(a) In the Economic Commission for Europe region, evidence on the contribution of volunteerism to youth development, civic engagement and emergency response is well documented; there are fewer visible barriers to volunteer action for a defined cause.

(b) In the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia region, there is a need to strengthen relevant legal frameworks and harness volunteering to build the skills of youth as a key priority.

(c) In the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa region, the most pressing need is to position volunteering as an integral resource to address gaps and inequalities in access to services, through partnerships with civil society and private sector.

(d) In the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific region, stakeholders emphasized the need to integrate volunteering into national sector development strategies.

(e) In the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean region, the consultations called for the private sector, academia, civil society and volunteer involving organizations to work together on research and on prioritizing volunteering for sustainable development.

(f) As a result of the consultations, the contribution of volunteerism under the 2030 Agenda was included for the first time in the outcome documents of the regional forums, including a call to mainstream volunteerism into international development strategies and national ‘road maps’ to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

14. UNV spearheads research into the contributions of volunteerism to sustainable development. In 2019, UNV published a research paper on the role of gender in volunteerism for community resilience that recommended that Member States establish volunteering legislations, policies and programmes promoting gender equality, inclusion and empowerment. In India, UNV and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport organized a volunteering research conclave focusing on data and measuring the economic value of volunteer work, the social impact of volunteering, an accreditation framework for volunteers, and innovative practices in volunteering. UNV collaborated with the African Union to convene a stakeholder event in Rwanda examining regional evidence and gaps in volunteerism.

15. UNV supported volunteerism for peace and development in the Sahel in 2019, in light of the security and humanitarian situation. UNV and partners convened a round-table discussion of the Sahel countries on the contribution of volunteerism. The round table recommended recognizing the role of local volunteers, moving from coalitions for advocacy to coalitions for impact, diversifying volunteer mobilization strategies, addressing volunteer support measures, and establishing a holistic approach to volunteer capacity-building.

16. During 2019, UNV and the International Labour Organization (ILO) supported nine Member States on the statistical measurement of the contribution of volunteering, an increase from five countries in 2018. Support to Ecuador, India, Nepal, Paraguay, Senegal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates included advice on



² A/RES/70/129 and A/70/118

integrating volunteer measurement into population censuses and labour force surveys, as well as testing new tools and volunteer surveys to capture the diversity of volunteer work across contexts. UNV and ILO published guidance on volunteer measurement in population census surveys; compilation and processing of labour force survey volunteer data from 60 countries; and providing gender analysis and insights on women's unpaid work using volunteering data.

17. During the annual campaign for International Volunteer Day, 15 United Nations partners joined UNV in the global 'Volunteer for an inclusive future' campaign. Special statements recognizing the contribution of volunteers to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals were made by the Secretary-General, the UNDP Administrator, the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and other senior United Nations officials.

18. UNV continued to make progress on integrating volunteerism into the 2030 Agenda through engagement with Member States and collaboration with the United Nations regional economic commissions, as well as investments in research and measurement to provide evidence on volunteerism to decision-makers. UNV is transitioning from traditional project implementation to facilitating advisory services for scaled results. The Global Technical Meeting on Volunteering for the 2030 Agenda, scheduled to take place alongside the High-level Political Forum in New York in July 2020, provides an opportunity to test new ideas and approaches with Member States and other development partners.

B. Outcome 2. The United Nations system is supported in delivering on the 2030 Agenda through the engagement of United Nations Volunteers and the integration of volunteerism.

Outcome indicator	2019 targets	2019 results	Score (%)	Performance
2.1 Percentage of United Nations partners reporting a positive contribution of United Nations Volunteers to their mandate	93%	93%	100%	 (green)
2.2 Number of United Nations partners engaging United Nations Volunteers	37	54	146%	 (green)

19. Continued strategic and operational collaboration with its United Nations partners underpins the engagement of United Nations Volunteers and the effective integration of volunteerism into the United Nations system³. As a common service to the system, during 2019 UNV enabled 8,282 United Nations Volunteers assignments with 54 United Nations entities, 16 of which – thanks to systematic advocacy and outreach – were new United Nations partners.⁴

20. UN Volunteers served in 154 countries, an increase of 7 per cent over 2018. The largest number of United Nations Volunteers served in Africa, followed by Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Arab States, and Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). New countries where United Nations Volunteers served in 2019 were: Bahrain, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Japan, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Paraguay, Singapore, Turkmenistan and the United Arab Emirates. During 2019, volunteer deployment increased by 58 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean, 18 per cent in Asia and the Pacific, 13 per cent in Europe and the CIS, 8 per cent in Africa, and 4 per cent in the Arab States.

³ Annex 4, List of United Nations partners who hosted United Nations Volunteers in 2019

⁴ New and returning United Nations entities in 2019 included: resident coordinator offices; Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Emergency Ebola Response Office; Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL; Convention to Combat Desertification; Office for South-South Cooperation; Office for West Africa and the Sahel; Department of Peace Operations; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; International Seabed Authority; Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance; Peacebuilding Support Office; Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia; Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation. United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS); United Nations Office of Victims' Rights Advocate (UNOV)

21. As part of a special effort towards supporting small island developing States, UNV support to multi-country offices and the United Nations system included expanding the United Nations presences in small island developing States and subregions, such as UNV-led UNDP programme delivery in Tokelau from the UNDP Samoa multi-country office; providing flexible and innovative capacities on emerging priority areas, such as the deployment of United Nations Volunteers in key UNDP ‘accelerator lab’ positions in the Fiji multi-country office; and enabling capacity-building and South-South cooperation, such as the international Volunteer from Uganda serving under a Global Fund project in Tuvalu to provide access to care, support and proper treatment to people affected by tuberculosis. In 2019, UNV deployed 334 volunteers to small island developing States and multi-country offices, a 23 per cent increase over 2018. Fifty-one per cent of the volunteers were female, and 45 per cent were national volunteers.

22. In 2019, UNV surveyed United Nations partners to validate the impact of volunteerism and volunteers on United Nations system priorities. Ninety-three per cent of partners reported a positive contribution to their mandate. The majority of respondents stated that they deploy United Nations Volunteers because the global UNV pool offers the talent they need, adds gender, ability, geographic origin, age and language diversity to their workforce, and comprises a cost-effective talent solution. Ninety-one per cent of respondents would recommend UNV to others, and 87 per cent are satisfied with UNV service delivery in mobilizing and managing United Nations Volunteers.

23. United Nations Volunteers reported on their contributions towards the 2030 Agenda through the volunteer reporting application.⁵ In 2019 most Volunteers contributed to Sustainable Development Goal 16, on peace, justice and strong institutions (43 per cent); Goal 5, on gender equality (21 per cent); Goal 17, on partnerships for the goals (17 per cent); Goal 3, on health and well-being (16 per cent); and Goal 10, on reduced inequalities (15 per cent). The contributions to the Goals reported by the United Nations Volunteers remained consistent with 2018, with increases of 1 per cent contributing to Goals 3 and 13, on climate action.

24. In 2019, UNDP hosted 2,671 United Nations Volunteers, who contributed to inclusive and sustainable development outcomes – an increase of 17 per cent over 2018.

(a) In Pakistan, 35 national United Nations Youth Volunteers supported UNDP in strengthening electoral and legislative processes. They engaged about 40,000 people in communities, youth groups, and academia, to share knowledge about civic rights, voter education, and related issues.

(b) In Zambia and Zimbabwe, United Nations Volunteers with the Global Environment Facility are at the forefront of climate change mitigation and response, as well as building resilience to crises.

(c) In Moldova and Armenia, United Nations Volunteers and UNDP worked on innovative solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals, including the use of big data and blockchain to tackle development challenges. In the State of Palestine, five Volunteers, all women, are serving with the UNDP ‘Solutions Hub’, an initiative of the ‘Accelerator Lab’ of the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, which focuses on bringing innovations to educational, entrepreneurial and legal services to Palestinians in East Jerusalem.

(d) In Papua New Guinea, 11 United Nations Volunteers, with UNDP, supported the referendum in Bougainville in the critical areas of logistics, outreach and field coordination. In Burkina Faso, 39 Volunteers, with UNDP, implemented projects in local economic development, youth, citizen participation, decentralization and local development. In Yemen, 11 United Nations Volunteer nurses and one medical doctor served with UNDP as part of the response to the crisis in the country.

⁵ In 2019, 4,927 active United Nations Volunteers (59 per cent of all volunteers during the year) reported on their assignments in the volunteer reporting application.

25. In 2019, 2,055 United Nations Volunteers contributed to United Nations peacekeeping and political missions, a decrease of 4 per cent from 2018. Some 1,921 international and 138 national Volunteers, including 791 women, were placed with 17 United Nations missions.

(a) In 2019, 520 United Nations Volunteers served with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, contributing to peacebuilding through such functional areas as civil affairs, human rights, health, and public information, as well as air operations and transportation. The Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remained the second largest United Nations organization mission, hosting 480 United Nations Volunteers.

(b) In the Central African Republic, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission saw significant growth (21 per cent) in the number of United Nations Volunteers in 2019 compared to 2018, bringing the total figure to 307. Their gender ratio improved, from 33 per cent in 2018 to 38 per cent in 2019.

(c) In Colombia, 129 United Nations Volunteers with the United Nations Verification Mission monitored the peace process and promoted a culture of peace. In Guinea-Bissau, 10 Volunteers with the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office supported its landmark legislative and presidential elections.

(d) Most United Nations Volunteers with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) served in South Sudan (66 Volunteers), Democratic Republic of Congo (62) and Cameroon (58). The volunteers contributed to refugee status determination, refugee protection, reporting, and other critical functions.

(e) After successful pilot projects in four countries (Albania, Burkina Faso, Colombia and Kenya), UNV and UNHCR co-created a dedicated United Nations refugee volunteer modality that empowers refugees to become active agents of change in their communities rather than passive beneficiaries of assistance. The most common assignment titles for United Nations Refugee Volunteers included community worker, local integration promoter, livelihoods liaison assistant, and translator.

26. In 2019, 641 United Nations Volunteers served with UNICEF, a 52 per cent increase over the previous year. The partnership was bolstered by the signing of a new global memorandum of understanding and joint action plan to guide global collaboration.

(a) In Ecuador, in 2019, UNV and UNICEF partnered for the ‘Social Champions’ pilot initiative, where United Nations Volunteers led face-to-face fundraising at the community level. In the six-month pilot, fundraising results by the Social Champion Volunteers were 24 per cent higher than those of other face-to-face fundraisers. The pilot will be expanded across Latin America in 2020.

(b) UNICEF and UNV increased their humanitarian response collaboration. United Nations Volunteers contributed to UNICEF crisis response in emergency contexts in the Central African Republic, Jordan, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela, supporting child protection, nutrition, youth and adolescence, procurement, and coordination.

27. In 2019, UNFPA engaged 377 United Nations Volunteers (46 per cent more than in the previous year), contributing to gender-responsive sexual and reproductive health measures.

(a) In 2019, UNV and UNFPA partnered on the Young Innovators Fellowship Programme, engaging young people in bringing new solutions to mobile health, sexual and reproductive health, partnerships, and financing.





(b) UNV and UNFPA started a Population Data Fellows initiative. The partnership aims to develop a talent pipeline of population data professionals to boost national capacities in civil registration and vital statistics critical for measuring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

28. During 2019, 272 United Nations Volunteers served with UN-Women, a growth of 18 per cent over 2018. The Volunteers, 63 per cent of them national and 75 per cent women, contributed to women's empowerment, participation, and access to opportunities.

29. The World Food Programme (WFP) hosted 198 United Nations Volunteers in 2019, an increase of 71 per cent over the prior year. In West and Central Africa, volunteer mobilization almost tripled, from 52 Volunteers in 2018 to 135 in 2019. In Benin, for example, 37 Volunteers (59 per cent women) supported the School Feeding Programme.

30. During 2019, 155 United Nations Volunteers supported United Nations resident coordinator offices in 57 countries. The Volunteers contributed to communications, monitoring and evaluation for development effectiveness. With the United Nations Development Coordination Office, UNV developed two new service offers, one aimed at supporting the reinvigorated resident coordinator offices and the other providing support to United Nations country teams in developing and implementing projects under the Joint Sustainable Development Goal Fund. In addition, 90 United Nations Volunteers served with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on humanitarian response coordination. Between OCHA and the resident coordinator offices, 244 Volunteers, 60 per cent of them women, have supported humanitarian and development coordination, providing daily contributions to United Nations development system reform.

Output 2.1. Expand opportunities for more people to contribute to United Nations development, peace and humanitarian efforts.

Output indicator	2019 targets	2019 results	Score (%)	Performance
2.1.1.a Number of months volunteered through UNV (onsite)	57,827	65,014	112%	 (green)
2.1.1.b Number of months volunteered through UNV (online)	2,440	2,198	90%	 (amber)
2.1.2.a Number of people volunteered through UNV (onsite)	7,000	8,282	118%	 (green)
2.1.2.b Number of people volunteered through UNV (online)	14,637	13,186	90%	 (amber)

31. In 2019, the number of onsite national and international United Nations Volunteers across the United Nations system reached an all-time high of 8,282, a 15 per cent growth over 2018. The total number of months volunteered per year increased from 53,194 to 65,014, or 22 per cent, due to the lengthening of an average United Nations Volunteer assignment in the United Nations system from 7.6 to 7.9 months.

32. The long-term trend towards increased demand for national United Nations Volunteers continued in 2019, reflecting a steady increase in the quality of human resources in programme countries while at the same time enabling United Nations partners to strengthen national capacities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The ratio of national Volunteers grew from 45 per cent in 2018 to 48 per cent in 2019.

33. In 2019, 67 per cent of international United Nations Volunteers were from the global South. This represented a major UNV contribution to South-South cooperation, enabling people from the South to tackle development challenges based on their experiences, knowledge and good practices.

34. The average age of a United Nations Volunteer in 2019 was 34. The proportion of Volunteers under the age of 30 increased from 30 per cent in 2018 to 35 per cent in 2019. In contrast, the number of Volunteers over the age of 60 decreased to 1 per cent, from two per cent in 2018. The majority of United Nations Volunteers over the age of 60 served in Africa.

35. In 2018, in response to the evolving talent needs of the United Nations system and in collaboration with United Nations partners, UNV launched new volunteer categories in pilot mode: United Nations Community Volunteers, Expert Volunteers and Refugee Volunteers.

In 2019, the number of Volunteers in the newly introduced categories totalled: 593 community, 88 expert and 35 refugee Volunteers.

36. UNV continued to proactively engage persons with disabilities in the United Nations system. In 2019, 45 United Nations Volunteers with disabilities were deployed; including 31 with UNDP and 14 with eight other United Nations entities.⁶ The number of candidates with disabilities registered in the UNV Talent Pool has grown to 3,315. At the International Organizations Career Development Roundtable in 2019, UNV and UNDP won the Innovation in Recruitment award for their joint talent programme for young professionals with disabilities.

Gender diversity

37. After many years of focused effort, in 2019 UNV reached gender parity among volunteers, with women comprising 51 per cent of volunteers. UNV continued to seek and recommend highly qualified women candidates to its United Nations partners and conducted targeted talent outreach for women professionals, resulting in a 156 per cent increase in new female registrations in the Talent Pool, from 22,717 in 2018 to 58,254 in 2019.

(a) In Afghanistan, 29 national United Nations Youth Volunteers, exclusively women, served with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan under the National Female Youth United Nations Volunteers project. Through their assignments, the new cadre of Afghan female Volunteers supports peace, justice, strong institutions and gender equality; empowers Afghan women to influence positive social change; and contributes to the peace and development of the country.

(b) UNV, the Peacebuilding Support Office and UN-Women are supporting gender-responsive projects funded by Germany in the Central African Republic, Colombia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Niger, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Sri Lanka. The Volunteers, hosted by UN-Women, UNFPA, WFP, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and UN-Habitat, support women's training and political awareness and promote the participation of women's groups in the peacebuilding process.

38. Institutionally, the UNV Gender Action Team monitors the commitments of the organization to gender mainstreaming and implementation of the UNV Gender Action Plan.

39. UNV recognizes that global averages tend to conceal regional disparities, which are influenced by realities on the ground. The ratio of women United Nations Volunteers exceeds 50 per cent in all regions except Africa, where only 43 per cent of United Nations Volunteers are women. UNV will not rest on the laurels of its global gender parity but will further sharpen its targeted approach to achieving gender parity across all regions, volunteer modalities and United Nations partners.

Online Volunteers

40. During 2019, 13,186 Online Volunteers served through UNV for a total of 2,198 volunteer months. They provided remote volunteer services to 33 United Nations entities and international organizations and 183 civil society organizations and public institutions. The most popular assignments were in translation, writing and editing, design and research. Some 58 per cent of Online Volunteers were women, and 5 per cent were persons with disabilities.

41. Mobilization of Online Volunteers declined significantly in 2019, mainly due to the introduction of a paid subscription to access the online volunteering service platform, as well as a halt in the registration of new non-governmental organizations. Given that decline, and taking into account the positive financial results of the organization, UNV management decided to provide the service at no cost from 2020 onwards for all eligible partners.

⁶United Nations missions, OHCHR, United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Registration of new non-governmental organizations has been reopened with a strengthened due diligence process. Growth in the demand for Online Volunteers is expected to resume.



Partnerships for volunteer mobilization

42. UNV continued to partner with Member States to mobilize United Nations Volunteers through full funding of assignments. By sponsoring Volunteer assignments in 2019, partners promoted volunteerism as a mechanism for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, while offering their nationals opportunities to share and gain expertise.

43. In 2019, UNV deployed 607 fully funded United Nations Volunteers. Contributions to the programme were received from the governments of Australia, China, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Ireland, Japan, Norway, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and Switzerland, and from the Agency for Volunteer Service of Hong Kong, Special Administrative Region of China, and King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Thailand. New partnership agreements on the full funding of United Nations Volunteer assignments were signed with Australia, China and Kazakhstan.

44. In 2019, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency supported the UNDP-UNV Talent Programme for Young Professionals with Disabilities, adding to the initial support in 2018 from the Government of Germany, which pledged additional resources to the UNV flagship initiative on digital transformation, aimed at positioning UNV as a leading entity within the United Nations on digital excellence.

Output 2.2. Motivated, well-equipped volunteers mobilized to contribute to United Nations peace, humanitarian and development efforts.

Output indicator	2019 targets	2019 results	Score (%)	Performance
2.2.1 Percentage of United Nations Volunteers reporting that their assignment enhanced their personal and professional development	94%	92%	98%	 (amber)
2.2.2 Percentage of United Nations Volunteers satisfied with their volunteering experience	93%	95%	102%	 (green)

45. United Nations Volunteers who reported that their assignment enhanced their personal and professional development remained high, at 92 per cent, with equal distribution between women and men.⁷ Ninety-five per cent of volunteers reported that they were satisfied with their volunteering experience, with slightly higher satisfaction reported by men.

46. In 2019, UNV extended its learning and professional development support to all United Nations Volunteers. Learning products were aligned to include on-boarding and career transition support and were refocused to more closely address the learning needs of Volunteers. Adjustments were made to ensure that volunteers with disabilities could access learning opportunities.

47. The UNV 'E-Campus' provided learning opportunities to 24,940 registered candidates and served United Nations Volunteers, with over 200 users accessing online learning resources daily. UNV partnerships with LinkedIn Learning, Coursera, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, and Rosetta Stone enabled Volunteers to complete 35,481 courses in business, productivity and language skills, and the transfer of knowledge to the United Nations workplace. Implementation of the learning platform for the 2019 Pan-American Games registered over 100,000 e-courses completed by local volunteers and staff, contributing to the success of the games.

⁷ In 2019, 4,927 active United Nations Volunteers (59 per cent of all volunteers during the year) reported on their assignments in the volunteer reporting application.

C. Institutional effectiveness: UNV is a more effective and efficient organization, with improved systems, business practices and processes, well-managed resources, and engaged personnel.

Financial performance and sustainability⁸

48. The total financial value of UNV activities amounted to \$221.3 million in 2019, an increase of \$21.3 million from \$200 million in 2018.

49. UNV continued to reduce its costs and align them with financial resources and future projections. The total cost from core, extrabudgetary, cost-recovery funds and the Special Voluntary Fund decreased by 5 per cent in 2019 compared to 2018. With that cost containment, enhanced financial management and improved volunteer mobilization, UNV increased its extra-budgetary reserves to 38 million in 2019, complying with the Executive Board-approved UNDP policy on maintaining a minimum of twelve months' reserves.

50. In 2019, Member States contributed regular resources to UNV through UNDP amounting to \$8.6 million, a level similar to the past 4 years, following the substantial decrease between 2009 (\$19.6 million) and 2016 (\$8.4 million).

51. UNV received contributions to the Special Voluntary Fund, amounting to \$4.5 million, a 14 per cent decrease compared to \$5.2 million in 2018, mostly due to a multi-year contribution from the Government of Sweden, received in 2018, covering 2018 and 2019. In 2019, contributions to the Fund came from 11 donors: Bangladesh, China, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Sweden, Switzerland and Thailand. The Fund remains critical to implementation of the Strategic Framework and to continued innovation in integrating volunteers and volunteerism with United Nations partners and in national development frameworks.

52. As mentioned earlier in this report, UNV received contributions to the full-funding programme amounting to \$22.4 million in 2019, inclusive of interest and multi-year contributions. This is considerably higher than full-funding contributions received in 2018, due mainly to a new revenue recognition policy that accounts for total agreement amounts, effective as of 2019.

53. In 2019, UNV renewed its agreement with the Government of Germany to continue funding the modernization of the Bonn UN Campus, which UNV manages on behalf of 20 United Nations entities.

Business process re-engineering

54. UNV continues to streamline its business processes to improve efficiency in volunteer recruitment and contract management. Volunteer recruitment time was reduced by four business days in 2019 compared to 2018, requiring 51 business days, on average, from approval of the description of assignment to entry on duty of the United Nations Volunteer.

55. In 2019 UNV introduced a series of system simplifications, introducing self-service solutions for United Nations Volunteers and candidates in the Volunteer Management Applications Modules. Paper contracts were replaced with electronic ones, including automatic translation into French and Spanish.

56. UNV reduced time spent on manual entries by piloting robotic process automation. This included new tools for one-time payroll entries, new automated deductions for health insurance for dependents, and pre-departure medical payments. The process of entering and updating vendor and banking information in the Atlas human capital management tool was outsourced to the UNDP Global Shared Services Unit in Kuala Lumpur, with requests sent digitally through the volunteer management applications modules.

⁸ See annex 3 for a financial overview of UNV in 2019.

57. UNV improved the functionality and intersection of its public website and volunteer management applications modules, making it easier for candidates to find and apply to relevant volunteer assignments.

Digital transformation

58. UNV made significant progress on its digital transformation in 2019. The organization established a corporate service desk where ‘chatbots’, powered by artificial intelligence, respond to over 15,000 queries per month from potential volunteer candidates and others, with under 5 per cent being escalated for human attention. For comparison, UNV previously received some 10,000 queries per month, all of which had to be handled manually. UNV will continue investing in machine learning to further improve service provision.

59. UNV continues to work on a unified volunteer platform, to be launched in early 2021, that will combine several existing systems into one. It will include a module for recruitment that uses artificial intelligence, robotic process automation and other innovations to streamline volunteer mobilization and management processes.

60. In 2019, UNV concluded the prototyping of a customer relationship management platform that will be launched in the second half of 2020. Through the platform, UNV will fully digitalize partner intelligence, volunteer deployment, and demand opportunity management, partnerships, outreach and advocacy efforts.

61. UNV users reported an increase in satisfaction as a result of the improvement in business processes and upgrading of systems through digital transformation. The organization invested in certification and training for staff to ensure their digital skills are aligned with these innovations.

62. UNDP is embarking on its own digital transformation process, which will impact systems central to UNV operations. UNV is closely engaged with UNDP in planning and implementing its digital transformation and sharing lessons learned from the UNV transformation process so far. UNV is a member of the UNDP Digital Governance Group.

III. Midterm review of the UNV Strategic Framework, 2018-2021

Overview

63. In the 2018-2019 biennium, UNV focused on mobilizing volunteers for the United Nations system as a way of building a thriving, financially healthy organization. UNV completed its organizational transformation process, consisting of regionalization, structural changes at the global level, fine-tuning and professionalizing country-level capacity, and stronger client focus. The transformation was accompanied by a diversification of the offer to United Nations partners through new volunteer categories, enhancements of the volunteer talent pool through national volunteer databases, and a re-engineering and streamlining of business processes. This resulted in a more efficient and effective UNV with a dedicated focus on its comparative advantage of supporting national volunteering infrastructure (outcome 1) and an all-time-high level of mobilization of United Nations Volunteers in the United Nations system (outcome 2). Details of the achievements are listed, by indicator, in annex 5. Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage of targets achieved for 2018 and 2019.

Outcome 1

64. Volunteer promotion is critical to the UNV mandate. It requires strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships, cutting-edge research and knowledge products, and broad-based volunteer-promoting activities such as International Volunteer Day. Its advocacy and agility have enabled UNV to exceed its targets for the biennium, with many Member States reporting positive contributions of volunteerism to the Sustainable Development Goals in their voluntary national reports (108 per cent) and number of volunteers mobilized through regional or national volunteer schemes supported by UNV (253 per cent). Support to volunteer schemes (89 per cent) and policies or legislation on volunteerism (146 per cent) were mainly achieved through a limited

number of national-level projects. Where in the past UNV funded and implemented most of the projects it was engaged in, during this biennium it focused on providing technical advice and expertise on volunteerism and the Sustainable Development Goals to Member States through projects implemented or funded by United Nations partner organizations. Over the last two years, UNV has exceeded its target for number of Member States contributing research and knowledge products to the Plan of Action to Integrate Volunteering into the 2030 Agenda (165 per cent) and the number of partners engaged in the technical meeting and consultations (108 per cent).

Outcome 2

65. Over the biennium, positive results achieved by UNV were enabled in large part by four drivers of change: decentralization, moving closer to where the partners are working in the regions and professionalizing and nationalizing the country-level work force; focus on the core mandate of UNV, namely, deploying skilled and highly motivated volunteers to support the mandates of United Nations partners; clear communication from management and delegation of decision-making to the regional level; and, above all, an organizational shift to focusing on the talent needs, client services, and evidence-based solutions required for United Nations system operations.

66. In that context, UNV has significantly increased the number of United Nations partners deploying United Nations Volunteers (by 59 per cent), and has signed new memorandums of understanding with the International Organization for Migration, the Food and Agriculture Organization, UNHCR, UNICEF and the United Nations Secretariat, while contributing to United Nations partners' stronger focus on volunteerism, such as the UNFPA corporate strategy on volunteerism, the Global Volunteer Office of UNICEF, and the UNHCR policy on an affiliated workforce that includes volunteers. The level of satisfaction of United Nations partners has continued to increase, reaching 93 per cent. In addition, UNV achieved strong growth in numbers of United Nations Volunteers, particularly national Volunteers.

67. The organization launched volunteering modalities (593 United Nations Community Volunteers in 2019) and piloted new ones (35 United Nations Refugee Volunteers). The level of satisfaction of United Nations Volunteers remained high (95 per cent), with some variations between duty stations.

68. Mobilization of Online Volunteers declined significantly in 2019, due mainly to the introduction of paid subscription for accessing the online service and a temporary halt to new registrations of non-governmental organizations. This resulted in a 77 per cent drop in online volunteering opportunities posted by United Nations partners and 40 per cent drop by non-governmental organizations. Due to this limited response, and in line with the positive financial results of the organization, a decision was made to continue subsidizing those services. The Online Volunteering Service will resume offering free service from 2020 onwards for all eligible partners, and registration of new non-governmental organizations has been reopened with a strengthened due-diligence process.

Institutional effectiveness

69. Considering the scope of UNV transformation during the biennium, the midterm review assessed current achievements favourably. Critical achievements include adjustment of the staffing structure; reduction of costs and alignment of expenses with available financial resources; and projections for future years. UNV costs decreased by 11 per cent (\$2.5 million) in 2018 compared to 2017, and by 5 per cent (\$1.8 million) in 2019 compared to 2018. In terms of financial sustainability, UNV increased its extra-budgetary reserves to \$28 million in 2018 and \$38 million in 2019, reaching the targeted one-year operational reserve. Consolidation, simplification and standardization of procedures, conditions of service, and delegation of authority are in progress. The first stage of digital transformation was rolled out, and systematic utilization of data helped improve transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making. Major elements of the digital transformation are due to be rolled out in the next 12-18 months, offering opportunities to clarify and improve engagement procedures.

70. Core resources received from UNDP have remained more or less unchanged for the past five years; other resources, such as the Special Voluntary Fund, have increased slightly.

71. The UNV management efficiency ratio improved significantly during the biennium, coming down from 10 per cent to 7 per cent, due primarily to the increase in mobilization levels and associated cost recovery coupled with modest cost reductions. Other management-related vectors of effectiveness, such as field unit capacities, individual and organizational learning, and knowledge management, have started to receive increased consideration.

72. The review recommended that certain indicators in the Strategic Framework results matrix be adjusted, both in terms of formulation, with associated revised baselines and targets for indicators where 2021 targets have already been achieved. It also recommended the reintroduction of a gender-specific indicator under the institutional effectiveness pillar. The proposed adjustments, for the consideration of the Executive Board, are detailed in annex 6.

IV. UNV going forward

73. Considering the findings of the midterm review and other critical priorities, UNV has identified five strategic highlights for the second biennium of its current Strategic Framework and the start of the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals.

74. UNV will continue to promote volunteerism as a transformative Sustainable Development Goal accelerator and will facilitate knowledge-sharing of best practices among Member States, the United Nations, and participating volunteer organizations. The organization will continue its partnership with ILO to build the capacity of national statistical offices to measure the contribution of volunteer work in supporting achievement of the 2030 Agenda. UNV will prepare its triennial flagship publication, the ‘State of the World’s Volunteerism Report’ 2021.

75. Building on the achievements of 2018-2019, UNV will maintain the momentum for volunteerism within the United Nations system. Promoting volunteerism will continue to be central to the added value of UNV, while mobilizing volunteers for the system is the key to a financially sustainable operation. UNV will work to respond proactively by leveraging the entire spectrum of United Nations Volunteer modalities and strengthening gender parity across volunteer categories, regions and United Nations partners.

76. The digital transformation will see substantial changes and improvements to how UNV does business. The unified volunteer platform, with integrated artificial intelligence, machine learning and automation, will change processes for identifying, recruiting and deploying United Nations Volunteers to partners, and UNV will concurrently review its institutional setup to align with a new business-process reality.

77. The review of UNV conditions of service will be completed in 2020, after a comprehensive consultation process, including with the United Nations Human Resources Network under the auspices of the High-level Committee on Management, and will be synchronized with the release of the unified volunteer platform. The review is focused on simplifying volunteer management, ensuring duty of care, and clarifying areas of ambiguity.

78. With the introduction of new conditions of service, digitalization and reduction in business processes, UNV will continue to streamline and decentralize its operations to ensure that increases in volunteer numbers do not result in an expanded operational structure.

79. UNV will continue to champion United Nations reform through the new generation of United Nations sustainable development cooperation frameworks, country-level collaboration with the United Nations development system, direct support to resident coordinator offices and OCHA, and support to humanitarian-development and peace-development nexuses through targeted United Nations Volunteer deployments, in partnership with the Peacebuilding Support Office and others; special service offers to multi-country offices; and active participation in other United Nations system-wide partnership mechanisms at country, regional and global levels.

80. As the evidence has shown in past years, volunteer action is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Recognizing its power, and building on the results achieved in the first biennium of its current Strategic Framework, UNV is well positioned to support the Decade of Action.
