

# UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



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POLICY

OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS

Operational policy matters

Report of the Administrator

## Summary

As requested in decision 81/1 adopted by the Governing Council at its twenty-eighth session in June 1981, this report contains a short analytical review of the use of volunteers in the development process. After tracing the evolution of the UNV programme since its inception in 1971, the report attempts to define succinctly the role of UNV in current international development co-operation activities and projects its potential future role in the light of past experience, bearing in mind the requirements of external co-operation to be accorded priority during the Third United Nations Development Decade. Also included are notes on two other policy issues: support costs and recruitment. Finally, the report discusses a proposed interim solution to the problem of financing external costs of volunteers, on which the Council is requested to take a decision.

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## I. THE USE OF VOLUNTEERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

### A. Introduction

1. Since its creation in 1971, the United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV) has developed its own distinctive character of universality and added new features to the concept of international volunteerism. In accordance with its mandate, the programme recruits volunteers on the widest possible geographical base and currently draws its ranks from 80 countries. The majority of the serving volunteers (78 per cent) now come from 58 developing countries, the rest (22 per cent) being nationals of 22 industrialized countries. Also, in conformity with the directives and principles laid down for the programme by the General Assembly in its resolution 2569 (XXV) of 7 December 1970, UNV is geared towards satisfying needs and priorities for development co-operation, as they are perceived by the developing countries themselves.

2. As a programme deriving its raison d'être from its ability and capacity to contribute in a relevant and effective manner to changing and increasingly sophisticated requirements of development co-operation, UNV has established recruitment criteria so as to ensure that all United Nations volunteers are fully qualified to undertake the tasks for which they are assigned. In accordance with these criteria, volunteers have a first (or higher) degree in their field of specialization and possess at least two years' relevant work experience prior to recruitment. A large number have degrees at the doctorate level in natural sciences, economics, education and administration, while others are medical doctors, engineers, nurses, skilled technicians, agricultural specialists, etc.

3. As distinct from many traditional volunteer-sending organizations, UNV does not focus primarily or exclusively on the involvement of youth in development co-operation; the role entrusted to the programme calls for the mobilization of talents and skills on a global basis without considerations such as age. While the majority (60 per cent) of the volunteers are in the age bracket of 25 to 34 years, an important percentage (26 per cent) ranges in age from 35 to 44 years. Also, a small but not insignificant number are professionals over the age of 50 years, who have joined the programme as volunteers on the completion of professional careers.

4. The mandate conferred on UNV by the General Assembly includes the support of volunteerism at the national level, often referred to as domestic development services (DDS). In its resolution 31/166 of 21 December 1976, the General Assembly reiterated its call for the UNV programme to further develop and expand its activities in support of DDS and requested, in particular, that UNV promote the formation of and co-operate fully with regional advisory groups for DDS. In its resolution 31/131 of 16 December 1976, the General Assembly designated UNV as a major operational unit of the United Nations for the execution of youth programmes, and especially of pilot projects to in-

crease the participation of youth in both development activities and in training programmes for youth workers. The growing involvement of UNV in support of DDS and youth programmes is briefly described in the continuation of this report.

#### B. Types and levels of assignments

5. While viewing UNV as an "additional source of manpower" and stipulating that volunteers should have "the technical and personal qualifications required for the development of recipient countries, including the transfer of skills", General Assembly resolution 2659 (XXV), which created the programme, left open for the recipient Governments to determine the types or levels of assignments for which volunteers were to be recruited. An analysis of the programme, as it has evolved over the years in developing countries in step with manifest needs, indicates, however, that UNV has become an increasingly important source of middle-level and operational expertise, assigned either within United Nations-assisted projects and working under the guidance of an expert or attached directly to a government institution or programme and reporting to a responsible national official. Typically, the volunteers serving in such functions have prior professional experience ranging from two to five years. On the other hand, there are also many examples of volunteers bringing to their assignments ten or even twenty or more years of experience in senior positions. While primarily oriented towards satisfying requirements of middle and/or operational-level experts, it is clear that UNV cannot be readily identified with any particular type of level of development expertise. Rather, the unifying characteristic is that all volunteers are specialists in the tasks and at the level for which they volunteer and are assigned.

6. An analysis of the present nature of UNV and the range and diversity of the ways in which its volunteers are now being used in the development process suggests that the programme could best be characterized as "appropriate technical assistance". Just as the "appropriate technology" approach parts company with earlier philosophies of technological change by questioning the assumption that "modern" technology is best, and attempts to adapt (or invent) technological solutions for the situations in which they are employed, the UNV experience to date indicates that a volunteer may be the appropriate and effective response to certain requirements of technical assistance. It follows that the decision to consider the use of volunteer technical assistance manpower ought to reflect a decision to adapt the level of development personnel inputs to the real needs of the situation and the requirements of the work to be performed. The use of United Nations volunteers, therefore, is promoted not because it is suggested that volunteers are better than experts, but rather that they may be more appropriate than experts for some purposes.

7. Among the very important functions to which United Nations volunteers are assigned are those of filling gaps for specialized personnel, the lack of which frustrates development efforts of many countries. In some cases, volun-

teers meet needs for qualified national personnel which many Governments do not have in sufficient supply. In others, the volunteers replace national personnel who are in training. Sometimes, the gaps which need to be filled are for vitally needed technical and administrative support personnel. Typically, such volunteers are draughtsmen, mechanics, laboratory assistants, topographers, heavy equipment operators, machinists, administrative assistants and paramedics.

8. In many developing countries, it has been found that there continue to be critical shortages at the middle and upper-middle manpower levels. This is especially true in the least developed countries (LDCs) and in some of the more recently independent countries, where very often relatively recent young graduates are of necessity placed in planning, supervisory and administrative positions. Along the same lines, many Governments find that even if they can in general meet manpower requirements with national personnel in cities and urban areas, it is impossible to do so for many remote and rural locations. United Nations volunteers are playing an important role by helping to extend the development process into areas which might otherwise lag behind the more accessible regions.

9. Another very significant function of volunteer-level technical assistance experts is to extend the reach of senior experts, either geographically in remote areas, or functionally, at the operating rather than planning and advisory levels. Very often, a volunteer with skills that are different from but complementary to those of a senior expert can draw upon the expert's experience, while at the same time supplying a substantive input which the expert is not able to provide in person.

10. Quite clearly, one of the principal attractions of the increased use of United Nations volunteers is that of cost-effectiveness. In considering the cost-effectiveness of using United Nations volunteers, a figure of approximately US\$14,000 per volunteer/year may be used as the typical, if not necessarily average cost. In the United Nations system, the typical expert costs for technical assistance projects in 1982 range from \$75,000 to \$100,000. Taking into account the conclusions in paragraph 6 above, a consideration of comparative costs would seem to argue for a more systematic and rigorous analysis in future programming to identify, when designing project inputs, those cases in which the traditional experts are genuinely needed, and those in which the tasks under consideration can be accomplished more appropriately as well as more economically by United Nations volunteer personnel.

11. It is sometimes suggested that in relying on developing countries for the recruitment of the majority of its volunteers, the UNV programme might contribute to the braindrain. This concern can hardly be considered valid in view of the comparatively small number of people involved and the fact that, in the vast majority of cases, the tour of duty is limited to two years. Account should also be taken of the mutual benefits to the developing countries

of this kind of Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (TCDC). In this connection, it is also important to bear in mind that as a result of the experience gained during their service as volunteers, many developing country nationals return to their home countries better equipped and qualified to participate in the social and economic development efforts of their own societies.

### C. The Future Potential of UNV <sup>1/</sup>

12. It seems clear that Governments are generally satisfied with the commitment and levels of qualification of the majority of United Nations volunteers, as well as with the effectiveness of UNV inputs. Also, in view of their appropriateness for many activities, and particularly since the limitations on the total resources available for programming make it essential to find innovative ways to reduce the costs of technical assistance without compromising quality, demand for volunteers may be expected to increase during the 1982-1986 programming cycle.

13. Some developing countries are now very well endowed with middle and upper-middle level manpower skills and, in some cases have become "net exporters" of skilled manpower. As a consequence, many countries would be in favour of increased use of national experts in projects rather than expansion of the use of United Nations volunteers. This point of view coincides well with the current UNDP development philosophy. It is noteworthy, however, that these countries often have a very active interest, both as recipients and contributors of volunteers, in the promotion of DDS and youth programmes. UNV programme statistics show that most countries in this category in the Asia and Pacific region have already DDS/UNV<sup>s</sup> working in them and that in several such countries these volunteers outnumber those assigned to traditional project activities. It is expected that this trend will continue.

14. It is almost axiomatic that indigenous development efforts at the local community level will consist primarily of very small-scale projects which, by their nature and geographical dispersion, are unlikely to attract or, practically speaking, to be able to absorb effectively traditional types of external aid inputs. International development assistance programmes, in attempting to find ways of supporting such activities in line with numerous declarations and resolutions during recent years, are therefore faced with an especially complex task, rendered all the more difficult by the fact that many self-reliant development activities at community levels are carried out by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This combination of factors has unfortunately frustrated

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<sup>1/</sup> See annex, which reflects the conclusions of the high-level symposium on Volunteer Service and Development held in Sana'a, Yemen, on the future role of UNV. The symposium was attended by Government representatives, volunteer organizations and agencies of the United Nations system.

the attempts of the international community to be of real help in so-called grass-roots development.

15. Persistent initiatives carried out over the years have put UNV in the position of being able to make a positive contribution in this field, which is of the highest priority and one of the most promising fields for future growth and development. UNVs and DDS and youth activities, at present consist mainly of regional and subregional projects in Asia and the Pacific and in Latin America, and fall into two primary categories:

(a) Technical assistance to DDS and youth groups: e.g., (i) provision of short-term consultants and occasional long-term volunteers for help in planning, programming and management; (ii) study tours and staff exchanges for DDS organization cadres; (iii) on-the-job training for DDS volunteer workers; (iv) support to the development and proliferation of appropriate technology centres; (v) training and promotion for the development of youth enterprises;

(b) TCDC (in addition to the inherent TCDC character of many of the above activities): e.g., (i) promotion of the exchange of knowledge and experience between DDS organizations through seminars, workshops and publications; (ii) establishment of enduring frameworks for mutual assistance by DDS organizations on subregional and regional bases; (iii) fielding of the special category of United Nations volunteers known as DDS/UNVs to live and work directly with local DDS volunteers in local communities.

16. DDS/UNVs now number some 100 and work in a growing number of countries in the Asia and the Pacific region. These volunteers are on long-term (one-year renewable) assignments and, in contrast to those of other United Nations volunteers, have conditions of service which are adjusted to the conditions of the local DDS volunteers with whom they are assigned.

#### D. Conclusions

17. At the end of its first ten years of operation, UNV has become a significant instrument for the recruitment and fielding of high-quality volunteer technical assistance personnel, at appropriate levels, in economic development activities carried out by the Governments in co-operation with the United Nations system.

18. In addition, UNV is responding to needs of Governments for greater numbers of operational personnel for development work directly within activities which they themselves plan and direct, thereby promoting cost-effective technical assistance and national self-reliance in the developing world.

19. The large percentage of volunteers drawn from developing countries makes UNV a particularly well-adapted mechanism for furthering TCDC and collective self-reliance in the developing world.

20. UNV is now beginning to tackle one of the highest priority but most elusive targets for international development assistance, grass-roots development activities with the rural and urban poor through the use of DDS/UNVs in support of indigenous volunteer and youth programmes.

## II. AGENCY SUPPORT COSTS

21. In its decision 81/40, the Governing Council requested a review of the question of reimbursement of support costs to UNV at its twenty-ninth session in June 1982, following consideration of the report on the activities of the United Nations Volunteers which was requested in decision 81/1. The Administrator has not yet completed his review of the many aspects of this matter which have to be considered and accordingly requests the Council to postpone a decision on this matter until its next session.

## III. UNV RECRUITMENT

22. As was promised to the Council in June 1981, the annual report (DP/1982/37) contains a chapter (III) on the various steps that have been taken to widen and diversify the base for the recruitment and co-sponsorship of United Nations volunteers, particularly from the industrialized countries. These steps include efforts:

(a) To strengthen existing collaboration arrangements with co-operating volunteer and governmental organizations in the industrialized countries;

(b) To review and modify, where appropriate, procedures for the identification and channeling of UNV candidates;

(c) To identify new sources and organizations for recruitment;

(d) To initiate arrangements towards recruitment of candidates from Eastern European and other countries in a position to supply qualified candidates;

(e) To make available through consistent and regular publication of the UNV list of vacant posts much information on the "demand side" of UNV operations;

(f) To maintain and intensify the usual process of dialogue and consultation with co-operating volunteer and governmental organizations involved in the identification/co-sponsorship of UNV candidates.

23. While all of the above efforts may not have produced the ideal solution, it is worth mentioning that, in absolute terms, there has been a noticeable, albeit moderate, increase in the number of United Nations volunteers recruited from industrialized countries.



24. The UNV Executive Co-ordinator will continue to pursue these efforts in order to maintain and even further increase the universality of the programme. The Administrator will not fail to keep the Governing Council informed and will bring to the attention of the Council any proposals that may in due course be considered useful to further enhance these efforts.

#### IV. FINANCING EXTERNAL COSTS OF VOLUNTEERS

25. As outlined in the annual report (DP/1982/37), contributions to the Special Voluntary Fund have not kept pace with the rapid expansion of the programme, and in particular with the continuously high rate of recruitment of volunteers from developing countries, for whom there is no sponsoring organization and whose external costs therefore must be covered by the Special Voluntary Fund.

26. The Executive Co-ordinator has undertaken extensive consultations with Governments and groups of Governments in order to attract additional contributions and thereby make it possible to continue the present system of financing, which will enable the programme to maintain universal recruitment and the lowest possible charge to the limited Indicative Planning Figures (IPFs) of the recipient countries, and particularly those of the least developed, newly independent and landlocked countries, which today are recipients of about three quarters of the volunteers in the field.

27. Despite encouraging responses from some Governments, the consultations have not led to a situation in which the increased contributions necessary to maintain the programme's fiscal integrity beyond 1982 seems to be assured. In the absence of firm indications at the present time of the pledges for 1983, the Administrator would like to inform the Council of how he intends to prevent a deficit if a shortfall of resources does take place. Since, however, the Special Voluntary Fund is in a position to meet all obligations in relation to all presently serving volunteers, the step outlined below will only be put into effect should the pledging conference in 1982 confirm the likelihood of a deficit through continuation of the present system, and then only for volunteers recruited as from 1 January 1983.

28. In order to prepare for a possible shortfall in the Special Voluntary Fund, the Administrator intends to include in the UNV pro forma cost being used for budgetary purposes, an amount representing the estimated deficit, per volunteer assignment, in the resources available to meet external costs of volunteers in a given year. As pledges are received during the year, these pro forma costs will be proportionately reduced. As is the case, at present, these budgeted costs will then be substituted by the actual cost on the termination of the volunteer from service. The financing available from the Special Voluntary Fund for each year will be taken into account, first and foremost, in order to reduce as much as possible the external cost element for

volunteers serving in LDCs, on an equitable basis, and only, thereafter, should funds permit, to reduce the costs of volunteers serving in other developing countries. The Administrator wishes to make it known that he will also authorize a small proportion of the funds available from the Special Voluntary Fund to be used for assistance to DDS, the UNV contribution to youth activities and promotional material.

29. The Administrator would like to stress that, although the two-year span of service for which the volunteers are recruited makes it necessary to act well in advance if the programme is not to find itself in an untenable position at a later date, the step outlined above will only achieve practical importance if no substantial increases in the contributions to the Special Voluntary Fund take place in the next two years. The Administrator remains hopeful that Governments will review their attitude to the Fund, and that new contributions and increased contributions will be forthcoming as early as possible to reach the modest level of funding necessary for UNV to continue to field volunteers from developed and developing countries alike at the present low cost to the developing countries. In this connection, it is recalled that, as a general rule, bilateral volunteer programmes distinguish between external costs and in-country costs in the same manner as UNV and usually meet the former costs from their own resources. It is important to note that, if the external costs of volunteers recruited from developing countries and now making up more than 75 per cent of the ranks of the UNV programme were to be charged to the IPFs of recipient countries, the cost of such UNV assignments would be increased by approximately 20 to 25 per cent. Besides placing a significant additional burden on scarce IPF resources, especially in the case of the LDCs which are major users of UNV, such a step would also unavoidably put developing country nationals applying for UNV assignments at a disadvantage and greatly inhibit the ability of UNV to comply with General Assembly resolution 2659 (XXV) calling for United Nations Volunteers to be recruited on as wide a geographical basis as possible including, in particular, the developing countries.

## THE SANA'A DECLARATION

We, the participants at the United Nations Volunteers High-level Symposium on Volunteer Service and Development, assembled in Sana'a, Yemen, from 7 to 13 March 1982, have arrived at a consensus that:

- (a) International volunteer service constitutes a most important vehicle for promoting solidarity among nations in pursuance of vital global objectives of economic and social development;
- (b) The cause of collective self-reliance among developing countries, as an intermediate stage in the process of attaining global interdependence, is effectively and innovatively served by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme in the spirit of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries;
- (c) The UNV programme, as an exponent of the universal spirit of volunteer service, represents an important instrument for counteracting isolationism and fostering true global co-operation;
- (d) the programme, in successfully completing its first decade, has truly reflected the letter and spirit of the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly of the United Nations; well-earned praise should be given to this young and dynamic organization which, with limited staff and resources, has been able to achieve the level of 1,000 volunteers in the field well ahead of the date envisaged; the attainment of its future potential should be encouraged;
- (e) UNV offers a unique opportunity to citizens of all nations, irrespective of age, sex, race or creed, to volunteer their talents and skills for the cause of international development co-operation, thus providing vitally needed technical personnel to developing countries and contributing to peace and the economic and social progress of disadvantaged nations, while gaining new knowledge, experience and a sense of personal satisfaction.

Within the consensus reached above and taking full account of the successful first decade of the United Nations Volunteers programme, the following recommendations, as endorsed by the participants, are proposed as the basis for the programme's future development:

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## 1. Concept of international volunteer service

1. The UNV programme constitutes a practical and effective mechanism for mobilizing support and for implementing the concept of international volunteer service for development. In creating UNV as part of the United Nations development system, the General Assembly, in its resolution 2569 (XXV), conferred upon UNV the task of ensuring that the concept of international volunteer service is formally recognized as an important component of international technical co-operation as well as the responsibility of serving as a custodian to safeguard and nourish that concept within the international community. UNV has been able to adapt the international volunteer service concept of an effective synthesis of motivation and skills as a new element in the United Nations system for the particular objectives of development co-operation. Accordingly, it is recommended that:

- (a) UNV should convene periodic inter-governmental meetings similar to the present symposium, in an effort to review with participating Governments, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, the development of international volunteer service;
- (b) UNV further develop its role as a focal point for international volunteer co-operation by convening at least once a year consultative meetings of participating organizations from industrialized and developing countries;
- (c) UNV further develop its range of documentation services on international volunteerism.

## 2. Magnitude of the need for operational-level volunteer manpower

2. United Nations volunteers, being particularly adaptable, represent a most relevant form of technical assistance, providing operational expertise at the middle and technical levels. The volunteers' dedication makes them especially effective for work in remote and difficult regions, which often lag behind more accessible areas in the progress of their development activities. United Nations volunteers have been found to be an especially cost-effective means of providing technical assistance in an era when the scarcity of over-all resources for international development co-operation, in relation to pressing and still growing needs, makes it imperative to ensure that the most efficient possible use is made of these limited resources.

3. There is a vast and largely unfilled need for middle-level operational expertise to support economic and social development activities in developing countries. The requirements for middle-level technicians were estimated in the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (A/36/689), held in Paris in September 1981, to be

in the order of 20,000 per year throughout the 1980s.

4. It is, therefore, recommended that continuous efforts be made with a view to increasing the over-all level of UNV assistance in response to the projected rapidly increasing needs of developing countries for middle-level technicians.

### 3. Role of UNV in development co-operation

5. In the light of its particular relevance to current development needs and its capabilities to mobilize appropriate and motivated technical assistance personnel at modest cost, there is still insufficient utilization of the UNV programme in international technical co-operation activities. In view of the ready availability of United Nations volunteers, compared with that of other technical assistance personnel at similar levels and bearing in mind the potentially much wider use which could be made of this technical personnel in all aspects of Government programmes, it is recommended that:

- (a) In the design of Governments projects, systematic consideration be given at the project formulation stage, to the use of volunteers. In such cases, the UNDP field office or other funding agencies should associate the UNV programme with the elaboration of the volunteer component as promptly as possible;
- (b) The use in the same project of associate experts and volunteers should be avoided. Moreover, UNV management should consult with the executing agencies to establish a procedure for identifying posts originally foreseen for associate experts, but for which no associate expert candidates are available, to avoid last minute conversion of these posts to those of United Nations volunteers;
- (c) In countries where national personnel are scarce or where such personnel are undertaking training, UNV, which is eminently capable of providing the necessary technical personnel to replace such staff, be encouraged to do so;
- (d) UNV examine the possibility of instituting more flexibility in terms of length of assignments for volunteers.

### 4. Universality, solidarity and interdependence through international volunteer service

6. One of the recognized strengths of UNV is its universality, its unique ability to call upon all the world's citizens, regardless of age, sex or national origin. A significant percentage of United Nations Volunteers are women. Moreover, the high percentage of volunteers from developing countries gives the programme a dimension extending beyond the traditional North-South

relationship and makes it an important mechanism for increasing South-South co-operation.

7. In order to further enhance the universality of the UNV programme, particularly the aspect of North-South co-operation, it is recommended that:

- (a) UNV and those co-operating organizations in the industrialized and developing countries that provide it with volunteers not only continue their collaboration, but also seek suitable means of enabling a greater number of volunteers from these countries to serve with UNV, according to volunteer service criteria applicable under the United Nations system; UNV is also requested to seek co-operation of additional governmental and non-governmental organizations to widen the base of participation in the programme;
- (b) UNV encourage the participation of people who have completed their professional careers and who stand ready to lend their rich experience to developing countries under volunteer service conditions;
- (c) UNV further enhance the already considerable degree of women's participation in the programme;
- (d) UNV explore possible modalities under which United Nations volunteers from developing countries could be usefully assigned in industrialized countries, with the primary purpose of giving additional impetus to North-South collaboration through improving understanding and co-operation among nations.

##### 5. Domestic development service for self-reliance

8. External development assistance activities, whether capital or technical assistance, can have only limited value unless they are related to national development endeavours; self-reliance is thus not only an objective but also a means for achieving social and economic development. Through its efforts in support of domestic development services (DDS), UNV has made good progress in supporting and promoting self-reliant development activities.

9. In order to strengthen and encourage the efforts of UNV in this direction, it is recommended that:

- (a) UNV extend its DDS programme from Asia and the Pacific to other developing country regions;
- (b) UNV undertake, at the request of Governments, national educational activities on DDS and help Governments so desiring to create such organizations in their countries through seminars, workshops and other activities at the national or regional level.

## 6. Participation of youth in development

10. Note was taken of the situation of youth, as both participants in and beneficiaries of development, in the face of world-wide economic stagnation and decreasing prospects for meaningful and rewarding employment. In the light of this situation and in line with the decision of the world community to recognize 1985 as the International Year of Youth (IYY), it is recommended that:

- (a) UNV, as a part of the core group of United Nations agencies involved in preparing the International Youth Year, provide a wide information system to Governments and non-governmental agencies related to youth programmes;
- (b) Bearing in mind the experience UNV will acquire from the Asian Youth Ministers' Meeting to take place in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in November 1982, UNV is urged to take similar initiatives in other developing regions of the world, in an effort to develop and strengthen youth participation in development;
- (c) Bearing in mind the example of youth participation in development in the UNV-executed project in Latin America, which has been assisting the ten participating countries for the last six years in the establishment of youth enterprises, the elaboration of national policy and the training of youth leadership for development, the UNV provide such assistance to other countries and/or regions in the developing world. To this end, the UNV programme is requested to discuss with UNDP and Governments concerned the modalities for furthering such technical co-operation programmes.

## 7. Increased awareness of and commitment to the concept of international volunteer service for development

11. UNV is producing a number of effective, high quality publications concerning the programme and concept. An expansion of this activity, both in the volume and in the variety of means used, would increase awareness and knowledge of the UNV programme and the concept of international volunteer service for development, in developing and industrialized countries. Furthermore, such increased activity, employing additional means of communication, would increase the pool of available volunteer candidates and the level of commitment to the volunteer concept, promote international solidarity and, potentially, lead to increased financial support of the programme. It is accordingly recommended that UNV utilize increased output of information materials and the services of active and returned volunteers to increase awareness of the UNV programme and its activities.

8. Increased UNV participation in the development efforts of LDCs

12. UNV has been, from its inception, heavily involved in the development efforts of the least developed countries (LDCs), as well as in those of the newly independent countries (NICs). The Conference on LDCs has further highlighted the need for UNV to participate even further in the efforts of these countries towards self-reliance and development. In line with the recommendations of the Substantial New Programme of Action adopted for LDCs, it recommended that:

- (a) UNV continue its increased assistance to LDCs and NICs by providing, on a priority basis, the qualified operational expertise needed, in line with the recommendations embodied in the Substantial New Programme of Action;
- (b) Further to the decision to substantially increase aid to LDCs and bearing in mind that UNV is considered to be a particularly appropriate mechanism for implementing increased assistance, the UNV administration approach Governments with a view to negotiating multi/bi-financed volunteer projects in LDCs.

9. Strengthening the UNV capability to backstop the programme

13. While recognizing that UNV and UNDP have been providing backstopping to the UNV programme and UN volunteers in the field, the limited staff and other resources of the UNV secretariat pose serious constraints to the improvement of its orientation of volunteers and to its administrative and logistic support. Therefore it is recommended that:

- (a) UNDP undertake, on an urgent basis, a detailed review of the present ratio of volunteers in the field and under recruitment to the authorized UNV staff at headquarters in an effort to redress the present situation and to arrive at a staffing level commensurate with the size of the programme;
- (b) UNV brief and debrief when feasible volunteers en route to assignment or returning after completion of assignment in an effort to enrich the programme with the varied experience of those returning and to better prepare those who are undertaking their assignments;
- (c) In the case of volunteers co-sponsored by industrialized countries, all efforts should be made for these volunteers to stop at UNV headquarters for a briefing on their assignment, in addition to receiving the information they are provided with by the co-sponsoring organization;



- (d) Where briefing at UNV headquarters is impractical, UNV is urged to prepare for orientation of new volunteers special information material such as kits, country profiles, etc.

10. Magnitude and adequacy of the financial resources of UNV

14. The widening disparity between the resources available to UNDP and the needs of the developing countries is a major concern to UNV, since the UNDP indicative planning figures (IPF) are the principal source of funding for in-country costs of UNV assignments. Of immediate concern is the low and static level of contributions to the Special Voluntary Fund (SVF), which is the sole source of funds to cover external costs of United Nations volunteers from developing countries. These costs make up between 20 to 25 per cent of the cost of a volunteer's assignment. The low level of contributions to SVF has created a real danger that UNV will be unable to field candidates for posts for which both in-country and candidates are available but for which no travel funds can be found. Moreover, the SVF has been designated by the United Nations General Assembly as a source for, inter alia, financing UNV support to DDS as well as for financing UNV activities aimed at increasing the participation of youth in development.

15. Regarding these vitally important issues of financing in-country and external costs of volunteers, as well as initiatives in DDS and youth activities, it is recommended that:

- (a) Governments, specialized agencies of the United Nations and governmental and non-governmental organizations give urgent consideration to complementary and innovative approaches to the funding of these in-country costs, including, by way of example, the establishment of trust funds, full funding or cost-sharing by recipient countries and/or by third parties, utilization of the regular programme budgets of specialized agencies, and the allocation of resources from the inter-country and global funds of UNDP, so as to supplement the scarce resources available under the IPFs of individual countries;
- (b) The Governing Council of UNDP appeal to the international community, including Governments, governmental and non-governmental organizations and private donors, to channel additional funds to the SVF, so as to enable UNV, as the only programme of its kind, (a) to continue to offer skilled and motivated nationals of developing countries an opportunity to serve the cause of development in other developing countries under conditions of international volunteerism and in response to vital and pressing needs for middle-level, operational expertise in developing countries in conformity with the General Assembly resolution 2569 (XXV) establishing the programme; (b) to avoid burdening developing countries, particularly LDCs, with the external costs as a significant additional change to project budgets; (c) to expand and inten-

sify UNV support to DDS; and (d) to effectively pursue its mandate as a major operational unit of the United Nations for the execution of youth programmes to increase the participation of youth in development.

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