“We must recognize the dedication of volunteers, their contribution to peace and development, their admirable spirit of service and their wide-ranging efforts to promote the goals of the United Nations”

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon
The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide.

Volunteerism is a powerful means of engaging people in tackling development challenges, and it can transform the pace and nature of development.

STRENGTHENING TRUST AND PARTICIPATION
Volunteering benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer by strengthening trust, solidarity and reciprocity among citizens, and by purposefully creating opportunities for participation. UNV embraces volunteerism as universal and inclusive, and recognizes volunteerism in its diversity, as well as the values that sustain it: free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity.

TOWARDS A NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTION
Under its newly-established Strategic Framework, UNV has five focus areas - youth, peace building, basic social services, community resilience and volunteer infrastructure.

UNV IN INDIA

In India, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India is the nodal agency for UNV. The history of UNV in India can be traced back to 1971 when the first Indian nationals were deployed to serve as international UN Volunteers.

SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT WORLDWIDE
For over four decades, Indians have been engaged both as international UN Volunteers across the world, and within India, supporting a range of development initiatives.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Building on this long history of successful collaboration, the Ministry, UNV and the United Nations Development Programme are focused on strengthening national youth volunteering infrastructure to engage more young people in community development.

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1970–1980
The first Indian nationals were deployed as international UN Volunteers through the Domestic Development Service of UNV, working in South Asia at the grassroots level, supporting local self-help efforts.

1980–2000
As India participated in the path-breaking programme that promoted Artisan Development in South Asia, UN Volunteers were on hand to provide support.

UNV partnered with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports to launch the highly successful University Talk AIDS project which helped to overcome stigma on HIV/AIDS on campuses throughout the country. Hundreds of UN Volunteers supported the Government in the aftermath of the Orissa super cyclone in 1999 and the 2001 earthquake in Gujarat.

2000 onwards
Over the past decade, UN Volunteers in India have helped to strengthen the capacities of district planners and elected representatives, supporting a range of initiatives on decentralized governance across India. UN Volunteers also continued to play a crucial role post disaster, following the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami.

As the world marked the 10th anniversary of International Year of Volunteers and the first-ever State of the World Volunteerism Report, in 2012, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, with support from UNV, launched a flagship publication on ‘Volunteering in India’. This unique publication celebrated the contribution of India’s volunteers to global development and volunteerism in the country.