

Report on the National Summit “Volunteers of Nigeria: Towards National Development”



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United Nations Volunteers

Nigeria, 2011

Background

Year 2001 was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly as the International Year of Volunteers (IYV). This year marks IYV+10 anniversary and we want to consolidate successes attained, and develop ideas and actions for raising awareness about the contribution of volunteerism to peace and development. United Nations Volunteers (UNV) program has been designated as the focal point for IYV+10 in order to catalyse action at national, regional and global level. In this regard, the UNV brought together its partners - Nigerian National Volunteer Service (NNVS), Ministry of Youth



Members of the IYV +10 planning committee

Development, National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), United Nations Millennium Campaign (UNMC), Fresh and Young Brains Development Initiative (FBI), National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN), NEPAD-Business Group, Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO) and ECOWAS - to recognize the important contributions made by

volunteers, increase recognition of volunteering and to celebrate volunteering as an expression of our common humanity.

It is well accepted that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) cannot be achieved without community support. In view of 2015, the target date of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the tenth anniversary of International Year of Volunteer (IYV) offers the opportunity to address the role of volunteerism in social and human development and further enhance the contributions of volunteers worldwide to the achievement of the MDGs.

National Summit “Volunteers of Nigeria: Towards National Development”

The National Summit was held on Tuesday March 29, 2011 at the Abuja Sheraton hotel



Students from the Government Secondary School, Aso Pada, Nasarawa State

and towers and brought together over 400 actors from civil society, media, youth and women groups, government and the private sector in order to develop a national agenda for volunteerism for peace and development. It provided an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the will, positive energy and innovation of volunteers for human development and human rights

through a multitude of volunteering initiatives from locally initiated activities to structured full-time engagements.

The programme commenced at exactly 7:45 am with the registration of participants. At 9:45 am, the National Anthem was rendered followed by an opening prayer led by a volunteer. The UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Daouda Touré in his opening remark stated that it was a great pleasure to open the National Summit commemorating the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10) with the theme ‘Volunteers of Nigeria: Towards National Development’.

He commended Nigeria on its vision of promoting volunteerism through the National Youth Service Corps programme and the Nigeria Technical Aid Corps (TAC) scheme that deploys volunteers to other African countries. He said Nigeria has supported over 33



UN Resident Coordinator and
UNDP Resident Representative

African countries through NTAC in key areas of development. He further stated that the power of volunteerism is a catalyst for peace, progress and development. He however lamented the low rate of volunteerism among young people in Nigeria. He said it is lower than what is obtained in developed countries.

The Nigerian policy on volunteering was drafted in 2006 and reviewed and endorsed by Nigeria National Volunteer Service (NNVS) and UNV in October 2009. The policy provides a guideline for the recruitment, training and retention of volunteers for service in their communities and allows for better coordinating of volunteering activities in the country. He therefore enjoined the Nigeria government to pass the bill on volunteering.

The UN Resident Coordinator further reassured the volunteers that UN will remain committed to supporting the volunteer movement in Nigeria. He stated that UN shares the core values of volunteerism, the ideals of service and solidarity, and the belief that together we can make the world a better place.

After the opening remarks by the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, other special guests presented their goodwill messages. Those that presented their goodwill messages include:

1. **Taiye Haruna**, Permanent Secretary, Political Affairs Dept, OSGF, The Presidency
2. **M.S. Midalla**, Director Community Development Services, NYSC
3. **Kayode Akintola**, Acting Country Director, Voluntary Service Overseas

4. **Dr Adrienne Diop**- ECOWAS- Commissioner Human Development and Gender
5. **Olawale Ajani**, President NYCN
6. **Layne Robinson**, Programme Officer Youth Affaires, Division Commonwealth Secretariat, UK

Mr. Adewale in his goodwill message **on behalf of the NYSC Director General** said he was pleased to be at the summit and congratulated the UNV on International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10). He stated that there was a synergy between UNV and other bodies doing the same programme. He maintained that VSO partner with NYSC to provide Volunteers to teach in rural areas in Nassarawa, Kwara and Kano States.

The Acting Country Director, Voluntary Service Overseas, Mr. Kayode Akintola expressed his happiness to be at the International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10). He stated that in 1985, the United Nations declared Dec 5 every year the International Day of Volunteers. He maintained that the role of volunteers cannot be over emphasized as they were significant to the development of countries in the world. He enjoined all volunteers not to relent in their efforts because volunteers were not worthless but rather were priceless. He then asked all volunteers to stand and asked people to appreciate them by clapping for them for the good work they are doing.

The Commissioner Human Development and Gender (ECOWAS), Dr. Adrienne Diop on behalf of the President of the ECOWAS Commission, His Excellency James

Victor Gbeho paid tribute to the United Nations for marking the 10th year of International Year of Volunteers (IYV +10). According to her, the International Year of Volunteers constitutes an opportunity for all the main stakeholders involved in volunteerism not only to examine the progress made so far, but also to learn lessons from the past (weakness and failures, successes and



achievements), and more importantly, to define ways for a better collaboration to promote volunteerism in West Africa.

She said since the International Volunteers Years in 2001 and the recommendation by the UN General Assembly to promote volunteerism as a way to support peace and development. She noted that since its inception in 1975, ECOWAS has been working towards regional integration and cooperation leading to the establishment of an economic union in West Africa, in order to raise the living standard of its people and to ensure economic growth, foster relations among member States and contributes to the progress and development of African continent in order to improve the conditions of living of West African citizens.

According to her, the ECOWAS Volunteers Programme was officially launched on Friday, 26 March 2010 in Moronvia, Liberia, by the President of the Commission, H. E. Ambassador James Victor Gheho. ECOWAS Volunteers are a group of volunteer men and women (18 to 35 years) from ECOWAS countries, with the capacity to adapt to different social, cultural and political circumstances. She said the volunteers are deployed to selected community-based associations, national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and specialized agencies that are active in socio-economic, cultural, political, and humanitarian work. The volunteers will help consolidate peace, recovery, national reconciliation and rehabilitation in crisis-affected communities. She stressed that it is expected of the members of the volunteer corps to strengthen the capacities of local projects and programmes. She said the initiative will complement the existing programmes for peace building and national volunteers' programmes in ECOWAS Member States.

The Volunteers Programme is designed to cover 15 Member States in the long-term. However, four countries (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Guinea Bissau) have been selected as pilot countries for the launch of the programme.

She called on the youth to help build a peaceful and rich Nigeria. She encouraged the development partners to be more committed in promoting volunteerism and solidarity by supporting the youth and help build their capacities for better involvement for the achievement of vision 2020.

PAPER PRESENTATIONS:

Mr. Wachiko Abdurrahman, Director OSSAP MDGs presented a paper on behalf of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs, Hajiya Amina Az-Zubair on the topic: The impact of poverty reduction measures. He gave a background of MDGs and the contributions of the Nigerian government towards the accomplishment of the goals. He highlighted the targets and key deliverables between 2006 and 2008. He mentioned the Conditional Grants to States (CGS) as follows:

- Conditional- States and Local Governments can only benefit if they meet certain conditions, including providing matching funding;
- Grants- funds are transferred directly to State and local Governments to implement projects;
- Scheme- focused on the MDGs and appropriated annually in the Federal budget under the Debt Relief Gains.

He mentioned the three stages of the CGS as:

1. Application: States apply for funding in MDGs- related sectors;
2. Evaluation: Two sets of criteria for evaluating applications;
3. Selection: Funds are allocated to States and projects that score highest in the evaluation.

He gave the achievement of government in different sectors such as health, agriculture, and provision of borehole water as: 20,940,000 people have benefitted from primary health care between 2007-2009, 4,978,100 people with improved access to safe water and 4,888,748 people have access to insecticide-treated nets.

He stated the position where Nigeria is on the MDGs that Nigeria has reduced the percentage of underweight children from 36% in 1990 to 23% in 2008. The target is 18% by 2015.

Part of the challenges facing it is lack of basic infrastructure to enable private sector growth nationwide including in rural areas.

He concluded by informing the participants that other MDGs goals to be addressed are combating poverty and inequality. He stated that the MDGs are a framework for assessing progress, but do not dictate their approach. Nigeria has domesticated the MDGs

into the vision 20:20:20; the MDGs must be part of a broader and holistic development agenda. He said they believe that the MDGs are a challenging but achievable prospect.

Dr. Aniebo A. Roberts, Executive Secretary, NEPAD Business Group-Nigeria and Director NEPAD Business Group-West Africa, presented a paper on MOBILIZING AND EMPOWERING MENTORS AND VOLUNTEERS THROUGH THE NEPAD-PEER MENTORING PROGRAM.

He started by stating the objectives of NEPAD as follows:

- Eradicate poverty
- Achieve MDGs
- Empower women
- Promote Africa's integration

He talked on Peer Mentoring Programme (PMP) Members And PMP Volunteers' Opportunities available for the youths, NGOs, Community Based Organizations, Cooperative Societies, Youth and Women Organizations, individuals and Opinion leaders nationwide as members and volunteers are to sensitize, mobilize and enroll the target groups into PMP to prepare them technically and financially in readiness for the international support coming to the informal economy on the heels of the International Celebration of United Nations Declaration of 2012 as International Year of Cooperative.

He stated that members and Volunteers are to work with PMP Social Entrepreneurs, Special Envoys, Goodwill Ambassadors and partners in providing educational support, counseling assistance and financial advisory to members through the PMP Peer Education Support Network and Global Partnerships Development and Resources Mobilization Network.

In conclusion, he thanked the participants and enjoined them to use the opportunities available on PMP Promotion and Business Development Fund.

The Executive Secretary/CEO NEPAD Business Group-Nigeria, Dr Aniebo Roberts presented a paper on MOBILIZING AND EMPOWERING MENTORS AND VOLUNTEERS THROUGH THE NEPAD-PEER MENTORING PROGRAM.

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Mrs. Awakessien Adimorah presented a paper on: opportunities on volunteering in Nigerian Youth Service Corp (NYSC)

She mentioned the opportunities for volunteering which include:

1. NYSC MDGs Advocacy project. Here one must be a corps member to qualify;
2. The Nigerian Graduate Volunteer Programme. Here participants are ex corps members who volunteer under the NYSC/VSO education programme.

She stated that the Nigerian Graduate Volunteer Programme is collaboration between NYSC and VSO. The programme engages and deploys ex corps members as volunteer teachers in disadvantaged rural schools in three states-Kwara, Kano, and Nasarawa.

Barr. Nkiruka Nnaemego CEO/Founder Fresh & Young Brains Development Initiative presented a paper on: Role of Youth and Women in Promoting Civic Education and Mandate Protection

She started by given the definition of civic education and ways it encourages political participation. She spoke on citizens' rights and responsibilities that citizens have the right to choose and reject representatives at the ballot box. It is also their responsibility to engage in the electoral process and stand up against malpractice.

During her presentation, she highlighted ways by which citizens can be involved in governance. These include:

- Nominating candidates to run for public office;
- Communicating with elected officials;
- Voting in all elections if eligible to vote;
- Holding public office at the local, state or national level;
- Joining and /or volunteering with community organizations to conduct voter education.

She enjoined the youths to volunteer to ensure credible and violent free elections. Also youth should volunteer to educate electorates and candidates alike. They should observe and report happenings on the election day to the appropriate quarters and finally, volunteer to help promote the involvement of youth and women in democracy and good elections.

Hilary Ogbonna, National Coordinator United Nations Millennium Campaign (UNMC) presented a paper on: Exploring Volunteerism as a Catalyst for Achieving the MDGs.

He stated that the Millennium Declaration was a watershed in global efforts at addressing poverty, human rights, social justice and inequalities. He noted that more than ten years after the Millennium Declaration most countries in sub Saharan Africa may still not meet the MDGs targets whilst a lot of governments including Nigeria have shown political and financial commitment, a lot of actions still need to be taken.

He believes volunteerism provides opportunities to fill the gaps created by policy, implementation of poor capacity. According to him volunteers bring skills, experience and innovations which are capable of supporting government and donor actions to achieve the MDGs.

He presented a case study on online volunteerism:

- Online volunteers makes use of internet and communication technologies/platform to reach out to people in need of their skills in developing countries;
- By 2010, online volunteers come from 169 countries (UNV);
- 53% of online volunteers are female;
- 62% of online volunteers come from developing countries;
- Among the most common origins of online volunteers are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, China, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Nigeria and others.

He mentioned the sectors where volunteers are needed such as healthcare, schools, community mentoring on development planning, youth and women empowerment through entrepreneurship education and other areas.

He concluded by stating that:

- Nigeria is blessed with rich human resources which can be harnessed through volunteerism to meet the MDGs targets;
- Nigeria's huge population presents us with immense opportunities of meeting the MDGs through citizens' volunteerism;
- Government agencies with MDGs mandate should develop programs which will encourage volunteerism;
- Civil society organizations should tap into the opportunities which volunteerism presents to implement their various programs.

The formal launch of the Volunteer for Life (VFL) Project in Nigeria was later launched by Mrs. Adeoye, Director, on behalf of the Hon. Minister of Youth Development Senator Akinlabi Olasunkanmi.

However, the Nigerian Government recognizes that youth volunteering, its energies and imagination can immensely contribute to national development, although volunteering rates among young people in Nigeria are lower than they are in developed countries. In addition, there are very few programmes on mentoring, volunteerism and social responsibility for young people in Nigeria. It is in this context that Fresh & Young Brains Development Initiative has made a request to the UNV for funding of Volunteer For Life project.

The overall aim of the Volunteer For Life (VFL) project is to:

- encourage Nigerians to contribute to societal development through Volunteerism and Social Responsibility;
- change mindsets towards seeing Nigerians especially Nigerian youth as positive agents of social change;
- seek ways to ensure that they are given meaningful opportunities to reach their full potentials, both as individuals and active participants in the development processes;
- offer an opportunity for the masses to contribute to sustainable livelihoods and developmental projects through volunteering their human, material and financial resources throughout their lifetime.

After the VFL launch, some volunteers from Ikaram, Pampaida, NGVP and VSO were called upon to share their experience with other volunteers. A documentary on the role of Volunteers in Community Development by Abdulazeez Musa was presented to the participants.

The Young Volunteers Corners, students of Government Secondary School (GSS),



Dance Performance Aso Pada



Reioyce Ibitove, from the GSS. Aso Pada

presented poems, joke and essays on the MDGs and volunteerism as well as a dance performance.

One of the aims of the IYV+10 is to consolidate successes attained by the volunteers and to develop ideas and actions for raising awareness about the contribution of volunteerism to peace and development. In this regard, ten outstanding national volunteers were

presented with awards by Alh. Mohammed Mustapha Office of the SSG, Bauchi State Government and Galina Chus, UNV. The recipient of the awards includes:



Group picture of the awardees with the members of the IYV +10 planning committee

1. Stephen ECHU, UNV volunteer
2. Abdul Tasui, VSO
3. B.C. Amuzie, NNVS
4. Nkiruka Nnaemego, FBI
5. Adelemoni Celestine, NYSC
6. Abu Abdulrasaq, NYSC
7. Eze Ifenyi Oliver, NYSC
8. Ugwu Johnson Chinweike, NYSC
9. Dim Ozioma Adline, NYSC
10. Adewemimo Adeyinka, NYSC

The vote of thanks on behalf of the awardees was given by Mr. B.C. Amuzie (NNVS). He appreciated the kind gestures and said the award will spur the awardees and other volunteers to do more. He prayed God will guide and strengthen the volunteers the more.



achievements and contributions to development, about opportunities to volunteer in various VIOs as well as to get personally committed to volunteerism.



volunteerism in Nigeria. The summit allowed consolidating the contributions made by volunteers to peace and development, to recognize the outstanding volunteers who contributed their time and skills to the achievement of the MDGs, to share experiences, best practices and ideas about volunteerism. The second segment of the IYV + 10 is scheduled for the second week of June.

A closing prayer was done by two volunteers a Christian and a Muslim at around 2:10 pm. The Volunteers Market and interview sessions took place after the summit. This activity allowed the participants to get more information about volunteer involving organizations (VIOs) in Nigeria, their

Conclusion

The National Summit was a success and gathered more than 400 participants from media, youth and women groups. Participation of dignitaries such as United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative; UNFPA Representative; Permanent Secretary of Political Affairs Dept, OSGF, the Presidency gave more importance to

**National Summit commemorating the International Year of
Volunteers (IYV+10) on the theme ‘Volunteers of Nigeria:
Towards National Development’**

Tuesday 29 March 2011

Programme

7.45-8.45 Arrival/Accreditation/**Volunteers Market Place**

8.45-8.50 National Anthem

8.50-8.55 Opening Prayers

8.55-9.10 Introductions of Guests & Participants

9.10-9.20 Opening Remarks by **Daouda Touré**, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative

9.20-9.50 Goodwill Messages

7. **Taiye Haruna**, Permanent Secretary, Political Affairs Dept, OSGF, The Presidency
8. **M.S. Midalla**, Director Community Development Services, NYSC
9. **Kayode Akintola**, Acting Country Director, Voluntary Service Overseas
10. **Dr Adrienne Diop**- ECOWAS- Commissioner Human Development and Gender
11. **Olawale Ajani**, President NYCN
12. **Layne Robinson**, Programme Officer Youth Affaires, Division Commonwealth Secretariat, UK

9.50-10.00 Dance Performance

VOLUNTEERS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 10.00-10.20** The impact of poverty reduction measures: MDGs programme scorecard in Nigeria by **Wole Edun**, Director OSSAP MDGs
- 10.20-10.30** Update on the National Policy on Volunteering by **Nigerian National Volunteer Service Mrs. H.A. Modu, Ag Director NNVS**
- 10.30-10.40** ECOWAS Volunteers Programme: Opportunities for Nigerian Youth by **ECOWAS Commission- Dieudonné Nikiema**
- 10.40-10.50** Mainstreaming Youth into Volunteering Africa through the AUY-VC by **Dr. Raymonde Agossou-Head, Human Resources & Youth Division, African Union Commission, Ethiopia**
- 10.50-11.05** Mobilising and empowering mentors and volunteers through the NEPAD-peer mentoring programme, **Dr. Aniebo A. Roberts**, Executive Secretary, NEPAD Business Group-Nigeria and Director NEPAD Business Group-West Africa
- 11.05-11.15** Young Volunteers Corner (Essay, Poems, Special Drawings)
- 11.15-11.35** Role of Women and Youth in Volunteerism using the VFL Project by **Barr. Nkiruka Nnaemego-Executive Director, FBI Nigeria**
- 11.35-11.50** Formal Launch of the Volunteer for Life (VFL) Project in Nigeria by **Senator Akinlabi Olasunkanmi-Hon. Minister, Federal Ministry of Youth Development**
- 11.50-12.10** Experience sharing by National Volunteers (each speaker given a max of 10 mins): 2 UNV volunteers from Ikaram and Pampaida, 1 NYSC and 1 MDGs office.
- 12.10-12.20** Documentary on the Role of Volunteers in Community Development by **Mr. Abdulazeez Musa, Voluntary Service Overseas**
- 12.20-12.30** Exploring volunteerism as a catalyst for achieving the MDGs in Nigeria by **Mr. Hilary Ogonna-UN Millennium Campaign**
- 12.30-12.45** Young Volunteers Corner (Essay, Poems, Special Drawings)

- 12.45-1.05** Presentation of Awards to National Volunteers by **Hajiya Amina Az-Zubair- Senior Special Assistant to the President on the MDGs and Galina CHUS, UNV**
- 1.05-1.10** Vote of thanks by **Mr. B.C. Amuzie, NNVS volunteer**
- 1.10-1.15** Closing Prayers
- 1.15-1.20** National Anthem
- 1.20-1.30** Photographs
- 1.30-1.50** Volunteers Market Place/ Exhibitions/Interview Sessions
- 1.50-2.20** Lunch/Networking Meetings
- 2.20** Departures