

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

--

MESSAGE ON INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

5 December 2009

This month in Copenhagen world leaders have an unprecedented opportunity to reach an ambitious and equitable agreement on climate change. On International Volunteer Day 2009, I would like to highlight the important role volunteers all over the world play in protecting our planet and advancing the important causes for which the United Nations works.

The recent “Seal the Deal” and “Volunteering for our Planet” campaigns are just the latest examples of how volunteers are helping to shape our world. The decisions and actions of individuals may seem insignificant in the face of global challenges. But when people choose to devote their time and energy they can, together, make a difference.

Volunteerism is a source of community strength, resilience, solidarity and social cohesion. It can bring positive social change by fostering respect for diversity, equality and the participation of all. It is among society’s most vital assets.

Today, I thank all volunteers worldwide who contribute their time to environmental protection, peace and development. In particular, I salute the 8,000 United Nations Volunteers who support the work of the United Nations. In doing so, I would like to pay tribute to the two UNV volunteers who were killed in Afghanistan in October, and all those who have lost their lives volunteering for the United Nations. Their service and dedication to the United Nations will not be forgotten.