



International Volunteer Day, 5 December 2008

Statement by UNDP Administrator Kemal Derviş

Reducing poverty remains our overarching priority as we work towards achieving inclusive human development and the Millennium Development Goals. While the current financial slowdown affects both developed and developing countries, it is the poor and most vulnerable that are disproportionately affected as a result of the interconnected challenges of a global economic and financial crisis and the lingering effects of the food and fuel crises.

UNDP works hand in hand with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme to advance peace and human development through volunteerism. An integral part of the UNDP family, UNV and its over 7,500 UNV volunteers foster empowerment, engagement and broad-based ownership of development processes.

UNDP partners with UNV to improve post-disaster and post-conflict environments by rebuilding communities and infrastructure, developing capacities and engaging marginalized populations, women and youth.

One key area of this partnership is our support to democratic governance worldwide. More than 1,500 UNV volunteers are providing specialist technical support to governments and other stakeholders at national and local levels. Working with local authorities and communities, UNV volunteers ensure that governance is grounded in the principles of human rights, access to justice, inclusion and gender equality.

UN Resident Coordinators and UNDP Resident Representatives worldwide recognize the dedication and contributions of UNV volunteers to the cause of peace and development. Volunteers enable communities to generate their own solutions to development challenges, in partnership with governments and development organizations. They foster partnerships that develop the capacities of people and institutions, strengthen social cohesion and solidarity, and engage all stakeholders to promote the greater good.

Their work on the ground is an inspiration to us all and on this Day I pay tribute to their commitment, hard work and sense of mission.