



SUMMARY FOR IYV WORKSHOP FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC 2-3 NOVEMBER 2000

IYV 2001

On 2-3 November 52 participants representing many sectors of society from 14 countries met in Dhaka, Bangladesh to plan and share ideas for IYV in the regions. The countries are as follows: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Lao PDR, Maldives, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa and Sri Lanka.

In preparation for the workshop a background note was handed to all participants to begin the process of understanding the IYV accomplishments by neighboring countries. Like many of the other regional workshops the main objectives were to:

- Establish a common understanding of the International Year of Volunteers
- Share views and experiences of volunteering in the region
- Identify key players in the respective countries, discuss processes and share experiences in the establishment of National Committees
- Develop an agenda of action

There were four sessions to accomplish the above mentioned objectives:

1. Volunteering in Asia and the Pacific
2. Who are the stakeholders?
3. National IYV Committees planning for IYV 2001 - Agenda for Action
4. Developing an Agenda for Action and Wrap-Up

Ms. Setsuko Yamazaki, UNV Chief of Asia, Pacific, Europe and CIS Section welcomed the guests. Opening addresses were made by Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports from the Government of Bangladesh, Mr. Manik Lal Somaddar, the UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Jorgen Lissner and His Excellency Mr. Kazuyoshi Urabe, the Ambassador of Japan.

Since the group was immensely diverse and representing Asia and the Pacific there was a large discussion on concepts and definitions of volunteerism and volunteer service in Session One. Key words presented include caring (*Kela* - Bangla), selfless acts (*Swajamsewak* - Hindi), working together (*Gotongroyong* - Indonesia), charitable action (*Nak Smak Chet* - Cambodia) to name a few. It was also agreed that the countries all had a history of volunteering and that there needed to be a bridge between the old forms of volunteer service to the more modern forms. A debate arose during the session on whether paid service was still considered volunteer service.

Session three focussed on planning IYV agendas for the year. There was concern from several participants lacking the mandate to establish an agenda as sole representatives to the workshop. The important outcomes of the session included the understanding that there is no formula for the establishment of a national committee. Also, there was a general understanding that the national committee's purpose is to address the concept of volunteering in the local region and aim at including everyone in the process. There was an overwhelming response from most participants to present their country plans for the group.

Something that separated the Dhaka workshop from other workshops was the focus on monitoring and evaluating the Year. During the group discussion participants were encouraged



to find methods of measuring the successes and down points of IYV 2001. Many groups presented ideas that would document their activities and the positive and negative effects.

One of the positive outcomes of the regional workshop was the cooperation that began outside of the sessions. Many participants began networking and sharing ideas on IYV activities and themes for the Year. In Bangladesh for example, there was an idea to establish a youth Asian/Pacific volunteer exchange programme.

The workshop concluded with two participants making formal statements on their feelings about the sessions. Participants as a result worked to establish a Dhaka Resolution recognizing the need of disseminating information on IYV 2001. After the conclusion, all participants were invited to watch the first launching of IYV in Dhaka. Three cyclists from the NGO Service Civil International (SCI) began a 31-day journey to travel throughout Bangladesh to spread the word of IYV 2001 and volunteerism.

The workshop results were reported through the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) and the story was released in two national papers: *The Independent* and *The Bangladesh Observer*.

