

A/57/PV.060

87-90

Honduras

Statement by Mr. Martinez of the Presidential Agency for Volunteerism
Agenda Item 98: Outcome of the International Year of Volunteers and its follow-up
General Assembly

26 November 2002
New York

For reasons that are not worth mentioning, Honduras came late to the commemoration of the International Year of Volunteers. However, Honduras, perhaps more than any other country in the world, can testify to the importance and value of volunteerism.

Four years ago, during the disaster caused by hurricane Mitch, which caused thousands of deaths and destroyed many of our bridges, roads and highways- damage that still has not been fully repaired- the Honduran people were able to show the spirit of solidarity of our compatriots who, even in the midst of their own tragedy, came to the aid of those most affected and most in need. Likewise and even more importantly, Honduras can attest to international volunteerism because on that same occasion the international community ran to our assistance. The very lives of the volunteers- who were often in danger- came with no other interest than to help us exactly when we most needed it, during the greatest disaster of our entire history. We thank them on behalf of the Government and people of Honduras.

For that reason, and mindful of the fact that the future of mankind will be better with the assistance in solidarity of volunteers, Honduras, in addition to expressing heartfelt thanks, wishes to propose to the Assembly the creation of a university for volunteerism; a university that would nourish the seeds of volunteerism that have been in all human spirits since the very moment of our birth; a university where young people, adults, business people and possibly even those in government could come to study and develop the full potential of volunteerism. It cannot be a mere coincidence that exactly 1,000 years ago the first university of the world was established- the University at Bologna- among whose famous guests were Beckett, Alighieri, Copernicus and Marconi. It was the precursor of all the technology that currently is progressing at an incredible rate in the world today. That is a world that is ready for and in need of a university for the study of volunteerism.

Poor as it is, Honduras, with a great deal of gratitude and looking forward to the future, offers the international community the basic infrastructure for that project. In our very beautiful land we have lush mountains, sunny beaches and green valleys with the tranquility and climate necessary for study and concentration for all the new Copernicuses, Alighieris, Becketts and Marconis of world volunteerism. There, in the diversity and beauty of our countryside, they will be able to study and think of the best way to build a better world. I can guarantee that. That university for volunteerism is a humbly way of saying, Honduran style, with all one's heart, thank you.