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United Nations Volunteers

United Nations Volunteers Report of the Administrator

Summary

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme provides highly motivated and skilled individuals with an opportunity to volunteer within the United Nations system. This report, covering 2018, presents the results achieved by UNV during the first year of its four-year Strategic Framework, 2018-2021 ([DP/2018/6](#)). Noting the accomplishments of the programme, the report reflects on the organizational transformation and strategic repositioning during 2018 and looks to the future. The organization is now better focused and reorganized to deliver on its dual mandate of mobilizing volunteers to support the United Nations peace, development and human rights agenda and advocating for the importance of volunteerism for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The following annexes, posted on the Executive Board website, complement this report: (a) statistics on UN Volunteers, 2018; (b) UNV financial overview, 2018; (c) report on the UNV results matrix, 2018; and (d) United Nations host entities, 2018.

Elements of a decision

The Executive Board may wish to: (a) acknowledge General Assembly resolution 73/140 of 17 December 2018 on volunteering for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which the Assembly welcomed the integration of volunteerism into all relevant issues considered at the United Nations, in particular the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and requested actions by UNV to further this agenda; (b) take note of the results-oriented annual report of the Administrator; (c) express appreciation to all UN Volunteers for their outstanding contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during 2018; (d) commend UNV for the results achieved during the first year of its Strategic Framework, 2018-2021; (e) welcome the publication by UNV of the report entitled *2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report: The Thread that Binds – Volunteerism and Community Resilience*, which presents new evidence on the roles of volunteerism in strengthening community resilience, voice and inclusion in the 2030 Agenda; (f) reaffirm the crucial role of the Special Voluntary Fund to the delivery of the UNV Strategic Framework 2018-2021, and call upon all development partners in a position to do so to contribute to the Fund; and (g) request that UNV build on the progress made in pursuing innovative volunteer solutions to improve its response to the challenges of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



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I. Introduction

1. This report covers the organizational performance of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme against the first year of its Strategic Framework 2018-2021. Chapter II presents the results achieved during the year, based on inputs from external and internal sources, reports and evaluations, as well as financial data. In most instances, primary data were used to measure progress against the results matrix. Chapter III concludes with the way forward.



II. Highlights of results, 2018

2. In accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/13, this chapter is aligned with the UNV Strategic Framework results matrix. Annex 3 provides further data on baselines, targets and performance.

3. Overall, the outcome and output indicator performance for 2018 documents that:

- (a) nine indicators were rated as meeting/exceeding expectations,  green (performance is 100 per cent, or above, of the Strategic Framework milestone);
- (b) four indicators were rated as below expectations,  amber (performance is between 60 and 99 per cent of the Strategic Framework milestone);
- (c) zero indicators were rated as not meeting expectations,  red (performance is below 60 per cent of the Strategic Framework milestone);
- (d) one indicator for which data are unavailable,  grey.

A. Outcome 1. The efforts of Member States to deliver on the 2030 Agenda are supported through volunteerism as an effective means of implementation and people engagement.

Outcome performance		Indicator performance against annual milestones	
1.1	Percentage of countries reporting a positive contribution of volunteerism to the Sustainable Development Goals in voluntary national reviews on progress towards the Goals	98%	
1.2	Number of other volunteers mobilized in regional/national volunteer schemes supported by UNV	188%	

4. Volunteerism is a powerful and cross-cutting means of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The voluntary national reviews show an increasing diversity of approaches among Member States as to how volunteerism is contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals. Of the 46 reviews presented during the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development, 29 recognized volunteerism and 19 (41 per cent) reported a positive contribution of volunteerism to the Goals. This is an increase from 40 per cent in 2017 and 9 per cent in 2016, but it falls short of the 2018 target of 42 per cent. UNV provided support and technical advice to 11 countries to strengthen data and analysis on volunteering for inclusion in their respective voluntary national reviews (Cabo Verde, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guinea, Jamaica, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Mexico, Niger, Sri Lanka



and Togo). Analysis by UNV shows that Member States incorporated information on volunteering in their reviews in two ways:

(a) **Volunteers as critical partners in implementing the 2030 Agenda, strengthening innovation, international cooperation and inclusion.** Australia's review, for example, dedicates a section to the role of volunteers for the Sustainable Development Goals, estimating the economic and social contribution of volunteers at 290 billion Australian dollars per year. Sri Lanka reports that 8.6 million people, or 40 per cent of the population, volunteer at least once a year. Niger highlights the key contributions of volunteers under each of the Goals under review in 2018. In Ecuador and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, volunteers have an important role in engaging women and vulnerable children and youth. Guinea, Jamaica and Togo recognize volunteer innovations and approaches in environmental protection, education, employment and poverty reduction, while Lebanon and Sri Lanka include volunteer initiatives to strengthen community engagement and social cohesion;

(b) **Volunteering as a means to widen citizen participation in Sustainable Development Goal processes, including data collection, consultation and validation of results.** In Mali, the voluntary national review reported that volunteer structures support awareness-raising, feedback and data gathering related to the Goals, particularly among young people. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Sri Lanka, volunteer organizations and platforms supported consultation and feedback processes for the 2018 national reviews, including stakeholder workshops and online and on-site consultations to address data gaps.

5. A total of 255,921 local non-United Nations volunteers were engaged in 2018 through national and regional volunteer schemes supported by UNV in Cambodia, China, Côte d'Ivoire, India, Mali and Uganda and through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). UNV mobilized 1,307 other volunteers through its projects in Rwanda, with 780 women volunteers trained on disaster risk reduction, as well as 150 volunteers in the Central African Republic, 140 in Zimbabwe, 125 in Kenya and 60 in Pakistan. Fifty-two volunteers were trained under the UNDP/Global Environment Facility regional global access and benefits-sharing project in the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Panama and Uruguay. In Uzbekistan, seven UN Volunteers serving within a joint regional project of UNDP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on building the resilience of communities affected by the Aral Sea disaster through a multi-partner human security fund for the Aral Sea, trained 2,000 rural community health volunteers to enhance capacity and raise awareness of preventive health measures.

Output 1.1. Member States are supported in developing programmes, policies and legislation that promote volunteerism and volunteer action.

Output performance		Indicator performance against annual milestones	
1.1.1	Number of volunteer schemes (online, on site, regional, national, subregional, youth, etc.) supported by UNV	92%	
1.1.2	Number of Member States partnering with UNV to develop their policies and legislation on volunteerism	167%	

6. In accordance with its Strategic Framework 2018-2021, UNV is shifting from implementing stand-alone projects to generating evidence and providing advisory services to Member States on integrating volunteering into their efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda.



7. In this context, during 2018 UNV provided technical and knowledge support to develop policies and legislation on volunteerism in Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, India, Madagascar and Uganda. To this end, the National Youth Volunteering Implementation Plan was developed in Cambodia, while in Madagascar, the Law on Volunteerism was approved in 2018. Following the support provided by UNV in Burundi in 2017, the National Assembly adopted a Volunteerism Framework Law in 2018.

8. In 2018, UNV shared its technical expertise on national capacity development of volunteer infrastructure in Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, India, Mali and Uganda.

9. As an example of national-level engagement, in India UNV is supporting the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan programme and district administrations in nurturing community volunteer infrastructure. UN Volunteer district youth coordinators mobilized 254,128 volunteers to support central and state government programmes in the areas of health, sanitation, education, nutrition, women's empowerment, child protection and digital and financial literacy.

10. As an example of regional-level engagement, UNV further strengthened its partnership with ECOWAS. Through the ECOWAS Volunteer Programme, 63 volunteers from 11 ECOWAS Member States were deployed to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in the areas of education, health, project management, communication, monitoring and evaluation. ECOWAS volunteers contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the African Union Agenda 2063, the ECOWAS Vision 2020 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Output 1.2. Promotion of volunteerism and its value is advanced through engagement of Member States, civil society and academia in research, public dialogue, documentation and dissemination.

Output performance		Indicator performance against annual milestones	
1.2.1	Number of Member States contributing research and knowledge products to the plan of action	350%	
1.2.2	Number of plan of action partners engaged in technical meetings and consultations at global and national levels	100%	

11. The plan of action for integrating volunteerism into the 2030 Agenda¹ called upon Member States, United Nations entities, civil society, academia and the private sector to enhance the recognition and integration of volunteerism as a powerful means of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2018, 35 Member States² submitted national situation analyses on volunteer infrastructure. UNV has consolidated regional synthesis reports as inputs to stakeholder consultations during the regional forums for sustainable development in 2019. Also in 2018, during its seventy-third session, the General

¹ A/RES/70/129 and A/70/118.



² Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Ethiopia, France, Germany, India, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, Malawi, Mexico, Montenegro, Netherlands, Niger, Paraguay, Peru, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Togo, Uganda, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Assembly adopted resolution 73/140 of 17 December 2018 on volunteering for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,³ co-facilitated by Brazil and Japan and with a total of 124 co-sponsoring Member States.

12. The *2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report: The Thread that Binds – Volunteerism and Community Resilience*, was launched at the high-level political forum in July 2018. Recognizing volunteers as a critical resource and a cross-cutting means of implementing the 2030 Agenda, the report explores how Governments and other development actors can partner with locally owned solutions to strengthen community resilience. Drawing on original research from 15 countries, the report examines the distinctive value of volunteerism and the factors that influence its relevance, impact and inclusiveness across social and political realities. The global launch was followed by 40 regional and country-level presentations of the report's findings at, which linked the findings to specific contexts.

13. During the annual campaign for International Volunteer Day, 5 December, 30 United Nations agencies, at the global, regional and national levels, echoed the campaign "Volunteers build resilient communities" on social media with the hashtags #IVD2018 and #ResilientCommunities. On the day, 58 United Nations entities, 10 funding partners, four private sector companies and 17 civil society and volunteer-involving organizations participated in the UNV-led campaign to acknowledge the role of volunteers.

B. Outcome 2. The United Nations system is supported to deliver on the 2030 Agenda through the engagement of UN Volunteers and integration of volunteerism.

Outcome performance		Indicator performance against annual milestones	
2.1	Percentage of United Nations partners reporting a positive contribution of UN Volunteers to their mandate	-	
2.2	Number of United Nations partners engaging UN Volunteers	109%	

14. Deployment of UN Volunteers and effective integration of volunteerism into the United Nations system⁴ is enabled by strong and continuous relationships between UNV and its United Nations partners. During 2018, UNV deployed UN Volunteers with 38 United Nations entities, including six new or returning partners: Economic Commission for Europe; Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; International Labour Organization; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and United Nations University (UNU). Data to assess the contributions of UN Volunteers to the mandates of United Nations partners is collected on a biennial basis through the United Nations partnership survey. No data are available for 2018 for outcome 2.1 in this report. The next survey will be conducted in 2019 and reported on in 2020.

15. In September 2018, UNV signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Secretariat to standardize and simplify the deployment of UN Volunteers across all departments, offices and missions of the Secretariat. UNV

³ A/RES/73/140.

⁴ Refer to annex 4 for the full list of United Nations partners that hosted UN Volunteers in 2018.

also signed memorandums of understanding with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and World Health Organization (WHO).

16. While aligned with the whole of the 2030 Agenda, UN Volunteers reported through the new volunteer reporting application⁵ that they contributed through their assignments to Sustainable Development Goals 3, 10, 11, 16 and 17 in 2018. Specifically, 43 per cent of UN Volunteers reported working towards Goal 16, 13 per cent towards Goal 17, 8 per cent towards Goal 3 and 6 per cent each towards Goals 10 and 11.

17. In 2018, UNDP hosted 2,286 UN Volunteers who contributed to inclusive and sustainable development outcomes. For example in Guatemala, 50 UN Volunteers supported the preservation of historic archives of the national police, safeguarding criminal records of violence during military dictatorship. Under the United Nations Electoral Support Project, implemented by UNDP, 38 UN Volunteers were deployed in Afghanistan and another 38 in Guinea. In Pakistan, 32 national UN Youth Volunteers supported voter and civic education of youth.

18. The 2,136 UN Volunteers who served with United Nations peacekeeping and political missions contributed significantly to peacebuilding in their countries of assignment. Some 1,998 international and 140 national UN Volunteers, including 732 women, were placed with 17 United Nations missions. UN Volunteers with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan created neutral forums to bring together conflicted parties to help build peace. UN Volunteers also supported workshops empowering women and youth. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 62 international UN Volunteers were deployed with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and 14 with UNDP to support elections in 19 localities, including remote and volatile areas. UN Volunteers with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic conducted outreach and sensitization activities on the Special Criminal Court among grass-roots communities. UN Volunteers with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali supported the first phase of the accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, integrating more than 1,400 combatants into the Malian armed forces.

19. During 2018, 848 UN Volunteers served with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), improving protection for refugees and people of concern, responding to their needs and ensuring access to basic services. UNV partnered with UNHCR to pilot national UN Volunteer opportunities for recent graduates from among the refugees. To this end, nine refugees in Ghana and five in Senegal undertook assignments with IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and UNU. Through a pilot project on enhancing citizen security and refugee protection through refugee youth volunteers, funded by the Government of Germany, four refugees served to enhance security and protection of their refugee and host communities in Colombia and Kenya, and two further volunteers were selected for similar work in Albania and Montenegro

20. Last year, 420 UN Volunteers served with UNICEF, supporting the protection of children's rights and their access to education, health and opportunities. Through the Youth Advocates programme, 33 national and seven international UN Youth Volunteers aged 18 to 24 joined 27 country offices to be

⁵ In 2018, 3,665 active UN Volunteers (51 per cent of all volunteers during the year) reported on their assignments in the volunteer reporting application.

agents of change in UNICEF. The Youth Advocates represented a diverse group, including 29 women, one of them an 18-year-old refugee, and representatives of other marginalized groups.

21. In 2018, UNFPA had a 49 per cent increase in UN Volunteers deployed, reaching 257 UN Volunteers, delivering enhanced gender-responsive sexual and reproductive health. In a new collaboration, UNV, UNFPA and EvalYouth identified over 60 opportunities for young evaluators to serve as UN Youth Volunteers with the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Food Programme on assignments lasting from six months to two years.





22. During 2018, 230 UN Volunteers served with UN-Women, representing a growth of 26 per cent over 2017. These UN Volunteers, 63 per cent of them national volunteers and 71 per cent of them women, contributed to women's empowerment, participation and access to opportunities.

23. WHO saw an increase of 268 per cent in the number of UN Volunteers deployed compared to 2017. In Pakistan, WHO mobilized 157 national UN Volunteers as district monitors to support measles readiness assessment campaigns at district level, targeting more than 32 million children. This was one of the biggest deployments with WHO in the history of UNV.

24. Resident coordinators' offices, hosted by UNDP, were supported by 137 UN Volunteers in 62 countries of assignment during 2018. These 74 international and 63 national UN Volunteers contributed to coordination, communications and monitoring and evaluation for development effectiveness.

25. In 2018, 70 UN Volunteers contributed to humanitarian coordination with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, an increase of 17 per cent. Of these, 33 per cent were national UN Volunteers and 53 per cent were women.

Output 2.1. Expand the opportunities for more people to contribute to United Nations development, peace and humanitarian efforts.

Output performance		Indicator performance against annual milestones	
2.1.1a	Number of months volunteered per year through UNV (on site)	95%	
2.1.1b	Number of months volunteered per year through UNV (online)	124%	
2.1.2a	Number of people volunteered per year through UNV (on site)	107%	
2.1.2b	Number of people volunteered per year through UNV (online)	122%	

Volunteer mobilization

26. Following several years of overall decline, in 2018 the number of UN Volunteers increased to 7,201 from 6,501 in 2017, representing an increase in number of months volunteered per year from 51,730 to 53,194. Despite the overall growth in months volunteered, the rate falls short of the 2018 target because of an increased demand for shorter-term UN Volunteer assignments.

27. During 2018, a year of transition for the organization, total volunteer deployments increased by 35 per cent in Asia and the Pacific; 14 per cent in Latin

America and the Caribbean; 12.5 per cent in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States; 8 per cent in Africa; and 2 per cent in the Arab States.

28. UNV continues to seek and recommend highly qualified women candidates to its United Nations partners for selection, particularly for peacekeeping missions. The proportion of women UN Volunteers remained stable at 47 per cent for the second year running. In peacekeeping and special political missions, the gender ratio increased slightly, from 33 to 34 per cent women over the same period.

29. The long-term trend towards increased demand for national UN Volunteers continued in 2018. The proportion of national UN Volunteers grew from 41 per cent in 2017 to 45 per cent. This enables United Nations partners to strengthen national capacities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

30. In 2018, 81 per cent of all UN Volunteers and 69 per cent of international UN Volunteers were from the global South. The latter represents a major UNV contribution to South-South cooperation, enabling people from the South to help tackle development challenges based on their experiences, knowledge and good practices.

31. The average age of a UN Volunteer in 2018 was 35. The proportion of UN Youth Volunteers under the age of 30 increased from 8 per cent in 2017 to 11 per cent in 2018.

32. In 2018, 16,748 Online Volunteers served through UNV, representing a total of 2,886 volunteer months. They provided volunteer services remotely to 47 United Nations entities and international organizations and 282 civil society organizations and public institutions. Some 60 per cent of Online Volunteers were women, 67 per cent were young people and 4 per cent were persons with disabilities.

33. In 2018, UNV piloted new volunteer categories covering event, community, refugee and senior/expert volunteers, responding to the evolving needs of United Nations partners. UNV deployed 116 community, 42 event, four refugee and seven senior expert UN Volunteers across Latin America, Eastern and Southern Africa and Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

34. UNV continued its efforts to engage persons with disabilities in the United Nations system.

Partnerships and agreements

35. In 2018, UNV deployed 561 fully-funded UN Volunteers in 88 countries and territories, funded by the Governments of Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sweden and Switzerland, as well as the Agency for Volunteer Service (Hong Kong), the International Association of Students in Economics and Management in Côte d'Ivoire, Cisco Systems and Save the Children.



36. UNV and King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi in Thailand signed an agreement in December 2017 to provide UN Youth University Volunteer opportunities for the university's graduate students. This was the first UN Youth University Volunteer agreement in the Asia region. The first three students were deployed to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization in Cambodia, Pulse Lab Jakarta in Indonesia and UNESCO in Thailand.

37. UNV and the Russian Federation signed their first memorandum of understanding in July 2018, launching an initiative to bolster the participation of Russian nationals in United Nations activities as fully-funded international UN Volunteers. For the first time, 18 fully-funded Russian UN Volunteers were deployed to 15 countries.

38. UNV and the China Youth Volunteers Association signed a memorandum of understanding in October 2018, enabling Chinese youth to serve as UN University Volunteers. Under the three-year agreement, UNV and the association will develop a UN Youth Volunteer programme through which Chinese youth will have the opportunity to serve in the United Nations system in support of the Sustainable Development Goals.

39. UNV partnered with Alphabet Inc. (Google Policy Fellowship Programme) and UNDP in 2018 to pilot mobilizing international UN University Volunteers to support prevention of violent extremism through policy and technology. Under this partnership, one international UN University Volunteer was recruited and deployed to UNDP in Indonesia for six months in early 2019.

Output 2.2. Motivated, well-equipped volunteers mobilized to contribute to United Nations peace, humanitarian and development efforts.

Output performance		Indicator performance against annual milestones	
2.2.1	Percentage of UN Volunteers reporting that their assignment enhanced their personal and professional development	98%	
2.2.2	Percentage of UN Volunteers satisfied with their volunteering experience	103%	

40. In 2018, 95 per cent of all UN Volunteers reported being satisfied with their volunteer experience, slightly higher than the target of 93 per cent. The percentage of UN Volunteers who reported that their assignment enhanced their personal and professional development remained high in 2018, though falling slightly short of the ambitious target of 94 per cent.

41. UNV continued the implementation of its UN Volunteer learning strategy, and expanded access to learning for all UN Volunteers globally. In 2018, learning for UN Volunteers included mandatory courses on prevention of harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority and sexual exploitation and abuse, optional courses on humanitarian assistance, business administration, official United Nations languages, individual coaching and support to career management skills, as well as 50 national and regional learning events.

C. Institutional effectiveness: UNV is a more effective and efficient organization, with improved systems and business practices and processes, well-managed resources and engaged personnel.

42. In 2018, UNV completed its organizational transformation process. Following the regionalization and structural changes at the global level, which came into effect on 1 January 2018, UNV fine-tuned its country presence by professionalizing country-level capacity and consolidating it from 79 to 57 countries, in line with the Executive Board's authorization to open up to 60 field units.⁶ In countries without UNV field units, UNDP continues to support UNV

⁶ Governing Council decisions 88/46 and 90/45.

operations. The transformation was accompanied by re-engineering and streamlining of business processes.

43. Some critical achievements include right-sizing of the staffing structure, reduction of costs and alignment of expenses with available financial resources and projections for future years. UNV overall costs decreased by 11 per cent (\$2.5 million) in 2018 compared to 2017. In terms of financial sustainability, UNV stabilized its Special Voluntary Fund reserves at \$15 million, and increased its extrabudgetary reserves to \$28 million due to integration of all financial resources and enhanced financial management, enabling the move towards establishing a one-year operational reserve.

44. Throughout the change management process, UNV championed gender parity of its personnel; 57 per cent of personnel are women and equal representation was reached in the International Professional category with 53 per cent women and 47 per cent men. This progress bears testimony to concerted efforts within UNV to strive for gender parity, in line with the UNDP gender equality strategy, 2018-2021.

Financial performance and sustainability⁷

45. The total financial value of UNV activities amounted to \$200 million in 2018. This represents an increase from \$195 million in 2017. The main contributing factor was the increase in UN Volunteer numbers.

46. In 2018, the regular resources contributed to UNV by Member States through UNDP amounted to \$8.8 million, the same level as in 2017, and slightly lower than the UNDP integrated budget estimates for 2018-2021 (DP/2017/39) of \$10.6 million per year.⁸

47. The UNV Special Voluntary Fund received contributions (including multi-year contributions) amounting to \$5.2 million, a 40 per cent increase compared to \$3.7 million in 2017. In 2018, the contributions to the fund came from the Governments of Bangladesh, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Sweden, Switzerland and Thailand. The fund remains critical for the implementation of the Strategic Framework, and for continued innovation in integrating volunteers and volunteerism with United Nations partners.

48. UNV also received contributions to the full funding programme amounting to \$15.6 million in 2018, including multi-year contributions. This represents an increase of 18 per cent from 2017. Resources to fund UN Volunteer assignments were received from the Governments of the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sweden and Switzerland, as well as from the Agency for Volunteer Service (Hong Kong), Alphabet Inc. (Google Policy Fellowship Programme), King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi and Save the Children.

49. UNV signed new agreements with the Government of Germany and received contributions to support the UNV digital transformation (\$1 million) and to fund the renewal and modernization of the United Nations campus in Bonn (\$1.5 million), which UNV manages on behalf of 19 United Nations agencies and organizations.

Accountability, results-based management, evaluation and audit

50. UNV completed the implementation of the recommendations of the internal audit conducted by the UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations in 2017. The

⁷ See also annex 2.

⁸ Executive Board decision 2017/31.

assessment had found that the governance arrangements, risk management practices and controls, while well established and functioning, needed further improvement. The report recognized the UNV transformation as a good practice within UNDP.

51. Under the Strategic Framework, 2018-2021, UNV continued to focus on conducting external independent evaluations of selected key projects mainly at the end-points of implementation.⁹ In 2018, this led to project evaluations at country and regional levels: (a) the evaluation of the establishment of a national youth volunteer programme in Burundi, which recommended scaling up the project to cover the entire country in a phased manner; (b) the evaluation of the establishment of a national volunteer programme in Mauritania, which recommended that advocacy efforts with national authorities be intensified to ensure a stronger policy and legislative foundation for the programme; and (c) the final evaluation of the Partners for Prevention regional joint UNDP/UNFPA/UN-Women programme for prevention of violence against women and girls in Asia and the Pacific, which recommended more institutionalized volunteerism in prevention programmes.

Operational support

52. In 2018, UNV fine-tuned the volunteer management application modules and related workflows, reducing processing time, improving transparency and accountability and increasing efficiency through decentralized functions. The average recruitment time from approval of the assignment request to UN Volunteer arrival was 81 working days for international UN Volunteers and 34 working days for national UN Volunteers.

III. UNV going forward

53. Taking into account the above results from the two important change processes at UNV, relating to *what* it does (the new UNV Strategic Framework, 2018-2021) and *how* it does it (the UNV organizational transformation process), there are four strategic highlights on the UNV horizon.

54. First, as the secretariat for the plan of action, designated by the General Assembly in resolution 70/129, UNV will build stronger alliances at country, regional and international levels to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships for volunteerism and the Sustainable Development Goals for evidence, research and knowledge, policy partnerships, advisory services to Member States and regional bodies and policy engagement and convening.

55. Second, UNV will continue to deliver better volunteer solutions to United Nations partners within the context of the United Nations development system reform. Through the completion of its strategic and organizational transformation, UNV has expanded and diversified its services to the United Nations system and is well positioned to support the new United Nations development system in the following key areas:

- (a) Strengthening collaboration through the memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Secretariat;
- (b) Supporting the UNDP country support platforms through UN Volunteers and volunteerism;

⁹ All UNV evaluations are reported on in the UNDP annual report to the Executive Board on evaluation: <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/annual-report/are.shtml>

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- (c) Reviewing the UN Volunteer conditions of service to align with the report of the Cross-functional Task Force on Duty of Care for personnel in high-risk environments.

56. Third, UNV will continue to contain costs and pursue additional efficiency gains. In line with UNDP policy and practice, UNV will ensure that costs of the organization are correctly attributed to the appropriate funding source, proportionally between regular and other resources, and in a simple, transparent and harmonized manner.

57. Fourth, UNV has embarked on a digital transformation plan, through automation, artificial intelligence, smart contracts (block chain) and integration of online platforms, in order to strengthen its position as the first partner of choice for cost-effective solutions for the United Nations system, with faster deployment times, reduced cost of operations and better talent sourcing.

58. UNV is one of the original common services to the United Nations system, providing highly motivated and skilled individuals an opportunity to volunteer within the United Nations system. Volunteers and volunteerism are uniquely placed to support the Sustainable Development Goals through community-level implementation, as well as to facilitate people's engagement and capacity development.
