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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY
FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

5 December 2010

On International Volunteer Day, we recognize millions of people around the world who give their time and talent to tackle global challenges: from volunteers working in their own communities on climate change adaptation and poverty reduction to those supporting global causes of peace, justice and the Millennium Development Goals.

Forty years ago, the United Nations General Assembly called for the establishment of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme. Since then, tens of thousands of UNV volunteers have contributed to our global mission, working with many UN organizations, programmes and agencies as well as peacekeeping and special political missions. I commend the engagement of these committed volunteers.

I also welcome the strong growth in more recent years of online volunteering, which connects people -- professionals, students, homemakers and people with disabilities around the globe -- and provides them with opportunities to contribute to development and the work of the United Nations. Still relatively new, online volunteering has great potential and I encourage all partners to explore what more can be done to harness the power of the Internet in this way.

This Day also celebrates the involvement of many other volunteers working with governments, NGOs, civil society and in their own communities to improve the lives of people around them.

Volunteerism helps bring us together as individuals and societies. It is a powerful means of mobilizing all segments of society as active partners in building a better world. Together, let us strengthen the institutional frameworks that support volunteerism. Together, let us use the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers, which we mark in 2011 (IYV+10), to find new areas where volunteering can make a difference. Let us honour volunteering as an expression of our common humanity and a way to promote mutual respect, solidarity and reciprocity.