



## Written Comments to the SDG Summit Political Declaration "Elements Paper"

With more than one billion people volunteering annually, the world is recognising the power of volunteers, as highlighted in last year's [Ministerial Declaration](#) adopted by UN Member States on 15 July 2022:

*We express our highest appreciation of, and support for, the dedication, efforts and sacrifices, above and beyond the call of duty of all health professionals and workers and all other relevant frontline workers and **volunteers** in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Volunteers build hope and resilience, improve lives, and strengthen sustainable development. Every day, volunteers meet community needs, and exercise leadership roles on the frontline in national responses and recovery. Volunteers remain critical to addressing the consequences of COVID-19 and restoring communities.

Thus, it is more important than ever for Member States to fulfill their commitments, made under the plan of action on [volunteering for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), to:

- Meaningful participation and involvement of volunteers in partnerships
- Promotion of conducive environments for volunteering and volunteers to enhance the sustainability of development results

as they continue to increase recognition of the value of civil society.

### Our recommendations to Member States:

#### NATIONAL STRATEGIES

**Volunteers build bridges** by brokering relationships between communities and state authorities and other development stakeholders. We ask Member States to:

1. Integrate volunteering in **policies and national development strategies** and in their Voluntary National Reviews to create a more enabling environment for

- volunteering
2. Engage as **partners and advocates for policies** supporting an enabling environment for volunteering
  3. Explore **national and global partnerships and collaborations** to leverage efforts towards supporting and promoting volunteering
  4. Build **coalitions and networks for learning and shared action** on developing and enabling environment for volunteering
  5. Adopt the [Global Volunteering Standard](#) to strengthen the quality of volunteering

## INCLUSIVE DIVERSITY

Volunteering **offers diverse paths to civic participation, but gaps in volunteer practices and aspirations** across countries and regions remain. We ask Member States to:

1. Build on experiences of promoting volunteering among youth and extend these opportunities to **all demographic groups**, especially through virtual and hybrid volunteer opportunities
2. Recognise, work with, and support **community-led volunteering systems and informal volunteers**, involving them as equal partners in the volunteering space
3. Address **barriers to volunteering faced by marginalised groups**, ensuring that all volunteers are valued and supported as partners in social change
4. Address **gender-related volunteering disparities and inequalities**, recognising that the disproportionate burden of care falls on women around the world

## MEASURING SUCCESS

Volunteering enables people of all walks of life **to shape and own the development** in their communities. We ask Member States to:

1. Invest in **volunteer data, research, and measurement** on the scope of volunteer work for the SDGs by accelerating investment and technology in measuring the scale of volunteering
2. Increase support for collection of [evidence and statistics on volunteer work](#) and the economic and social contributions of volunteers
3. Support a wider range of evidence-based, quality volunteering practices; knowledge sharing; and scaling up ways to **address barriers to volunteering for marginalised groups**
4. Accept **citizen generated data** to inform SDG review processes and national plans