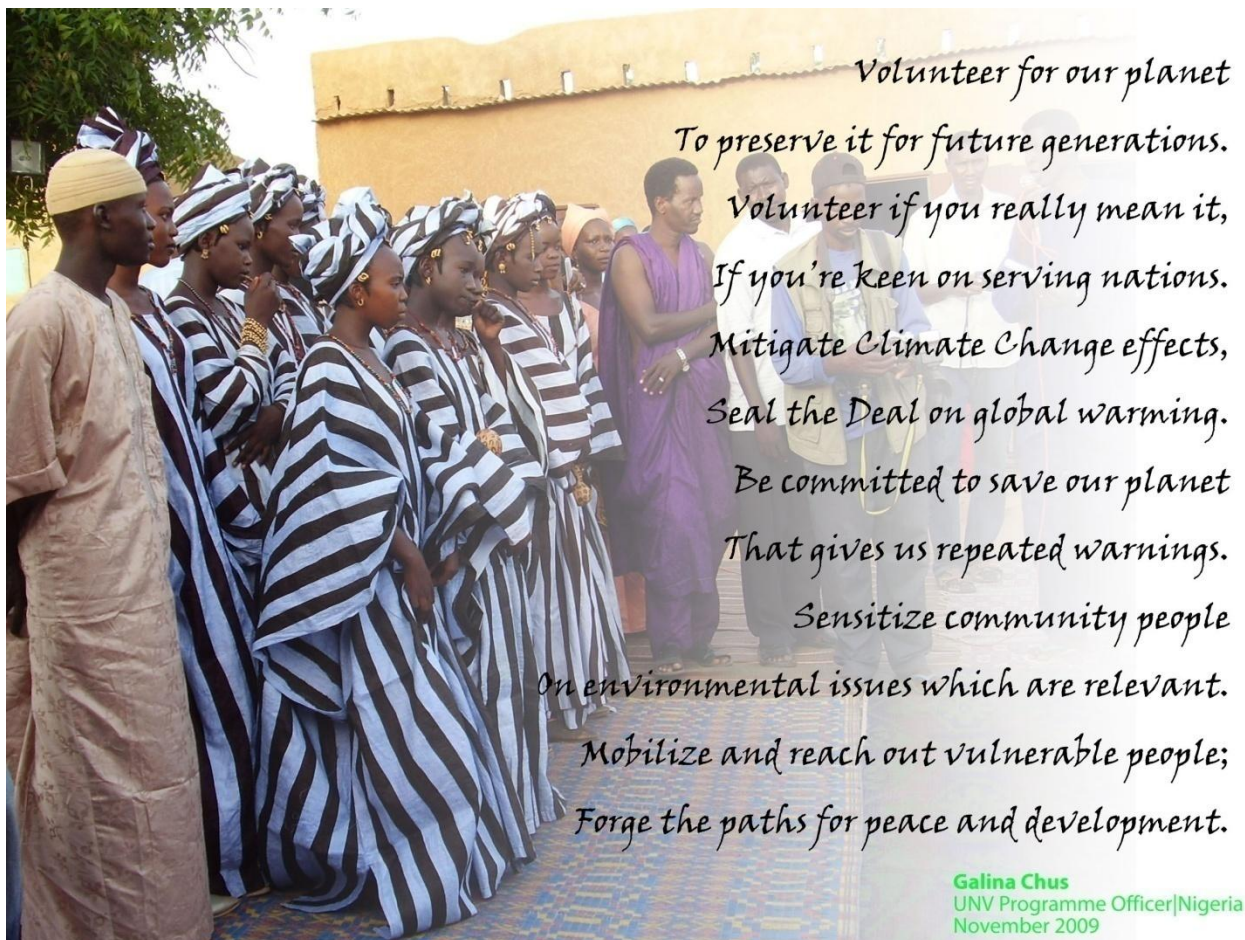


# *Report on the International Volunteer Day (IVD) 2009*



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## Background

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Programme is the UN organization that promotes volunteerism to support peace and development worldwide. Volunteerism can transform the



pace and nature of development and it benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer. UNV contributes to peace and development by advocating for volunteerism globally, encouraging partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing volunteers. It mobilizes about 8,000 experienced professionals each year worldwide as UNV volunteers.

In Nigeria, UNV became manifested in 1991 with the fielding of UNV

volunteers in the health sector i.e. the placement of 30 Cuban doctors in nine states in the northern region of the. The Nigerian UNV Programme maintained a size of about 30 UNV volunteers up to mid nineteen-nineties.

In 2009, the UNV Programme in Nigeria processed the recruitment and deployment of **25 Nigerians** as IUNVs to foreign countries, namely Sudan, Congo, Liberia, Nepal, Afghanistan, Haiti, Trinidad Tobago, Namibia, Ethiopia and Malawi. Currently, the UNV Programme in Nigeria consists of **2 international and 6 national UNVs**. Recruitment of **4 NUNVs** is in progress.

### I. International Volunteer Day in Abuja December 3-5

The International Volunteer Day (IVD), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in



1985, is celebrated globally every year on December 5. This day provides an opportunity to promote volunteerism and create/raise public awareness on the values of volunteerism. This year was crucial to address global warming and climate change effects because the IVD took place only 48 hours before the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen.

Ms Pansieri, Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers, noted that “Our climate is changing and everybody needs to get involved to help us cope. Every hour counts.” In order to highlight how important it is for people to get involved as volunteers in finding solutions to mitigate and adapt climate change, the United Nations Volunteer Headquarters decided to advocate environment and suggested a theme of the 2009 IVD “Volunteer For Our Planet” (VFOP).

Nigeria, as a member of the United Nations, joined the rest of the world to celebrate the International Volunteer Day. Preparation for the celebration of the 2009 IVD in Nigeria started in September 2009 with consultative meeting between the management of Nigerian National Volunteer Service (NNVS), United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and the Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO). Central Planning Committee was established to map out activities to mark the 2009 IVD. As part of activities to celebrate the 2009 IVD, the Nigerian National Volunteer Service (NNVS) has been able to mobilize the 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) intimating them on the event and encouraging a nationwide celebration.

An outline of key activities for the 2009 IVD:

- 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009 – Press Conference
- 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2009 – Rally
- 4<sup>th</sup> December – Tree Planting
- 4<sup>th</sup> December – Prayer in Mosque
- 5<sup>th</sup> December – Seminar and Award Presentation
- 6<sup>th</sup> December – Prayer in Churches

### Press Conference



December 1, Press briefing by Ambassador Chike Alex Anigbo, Permanent Secretary, Political Affairs, office of the secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF). The Permanent Secretary reminded the audience that the history of volunteering in Nigeria dated back to pre-industrial societies, where mutual self-help (building homes for the aged and invalid, bush clearing of farmlands, roads maintenance)

was vital to the survival. He further stated that with globalization, issue of volunteering had gained strength at both national and international levels all for the good of humanity. Finally, the Permanent Secretary highlighted the crucial role that volunteers play in addressing environmental issues and invited everyone to join the “Volunteering For Our Planet” campaign.

## Rally



The Rally commenced at 7 a.m. with a float ride of **one thousand youth, women and students** from Berger Junction in Abuja to an open field in Area 11 in Garki. All participants wore T-shirts and caps bearing the message of the theme and the IVD logo. The objective of the Rally was to create awareness of Nigerians on volunteerism and issues of global concern, namely the global warming. Ambassador Chike Anigbo, Permanent Secretary (Political Affairs), OSGF, encouraged the participants of the rally to adopt the habit of cleanliness, as 60% of illnesses were traceable to unhealthy environment conditions. The UNV Programme Officer, urged the participants to imbibe the habit of being conscious of the environment activities, both at work and at home. She advocated for proper use of waste bins and for the replacement of plastic bags with the reusable cloth ones.

## Tree Planting

The Tree Planting exercise took place opposite the Unity Garden, Mabusi in Abuja on December 3, 2009 with active participation of collaborating Ministries and Agencies such as Federal Ministry of Environment, Women Affairs and Social Development, Federal Capital Territory Administration, Women Environmental Programme (WEP), Fresh & Young Brains Development



Initiative (FBI), Abuja Environment Protection Board (AEPB) and Women Affairs and Social Development. Over **200 participants** took part in the tree planting exercise. Honorable guests urged Nigerians to plant trees to save our planet from environment degradation.

While planting his own tree, the UNDP Deputy Country Director in Nigerian, Mr.

Janthomas Hiemstra highlighted the importance of planting trees to arrest the damage caused by degradation of the environment.

## Seminar

The Seminar/Award presentation for the 2009 IVD took place on December 5, 2009 at Cyprian Ekwensi Arts and Cultural Centre. About **205 participants** attended the event amongst whom were dignitaries such as the Ambassador Joe Keshi; Permanent Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs and former National Coordinator NNVS and Mrs. M/N. Ajanah, outgoing Director of NNVS.

## Toolkit on volunteerism

Toolkit on volunteerism was launched was launched by Ambassador Joe Keshi during the 2009 IVD. The Ambassador remarked that it had come at a good time when volunteering was gaining official ground in the country. Toolkit on volunteerism was a collaborative project of the Fresh & Young Brains Development Initiative (FBI), the United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNVP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Nigeria and the Nigerian National Volunteer Service (NNVS). The toolkit was designed as a guide for peer education at individual

and community level and aimed at providing a comprehensive guide on youth volunteerism, its concepts and role in development. The project focused on a) national volunteers seen as main agents for constructive change; b) volunteer policies and procedures; c) best practices; d) reasons and benefits of volunteerism.

### **Reusable bags**

Reusable bags were launched by Mrs. M.N. Ajanah, Director of the Nigerian National Volunteer Service (NNVS) during the 2009 IVD in Abuja and in Ikaram. She thanked the UNV Programme Officer on behalf of all present for promoting replacement of the plastic bags with the environment friendly re-usable bags which are a simple solution to plastic bags. . In her



presentation, the UNV Programme Officer sensitized the participants of the workshop on harmful effects of plastic bags on environment. Plastic bags are popular with both retailers and consumers because they are cheap, lightweight and hygienic means of carrying goods or food. But every medal has its reverse and everyone should bear in mind that plastic bags are non-biodegradable and will remain in the landfills for 450-1000 years; they litter the landscape and kill

animals. About 100,000 animals are killed every year due to plastic bags. Many animals ingest plastic bags, mistaking them for food. Finally, the UNV Programme Officer recommended the use of re-useable bags to the participants and urged them to sign the 'seal the deal' petition which were available on-line and also in hard copies.

Individuals and organizations who contributed in various ways to the growth of volunteering in Nigeria were presented with certificates of recognition at the event. Selection of the awardees was earlier done by a small committee, using carefully drawn out criteria. Among the awardees were also those who worked with measurable achievement on environmental sustainability and conservation.

## **II. IVD in Ikaram/Ondo State, December 7**

Planning for the IVD event in Ikaram commenced when the UNV team from Abuja visited the Ikaram Millennium Village (MV) team in September 2009. The UNV team recognized that the recruitment of two more UNVs into the MV team (to make three UNVs) presented an

opportunity to strengthen potentials for volunteerism at the project level. This idea was embraced by the MV team, activities were suggested and the date was selected to be on Monday 7th December 2009-coinciding with the commencement of the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.



The 2009 IVD programme tagged “Volunteering For A Cleaner and Healthier Environment” commenced in the morning with an awareness rally in Ikaram community to sensitize the

people about the event. Over a **hundred people** including youths, women and men participated in the rally singing and dancing from Ikaram town hall to the ICT centre and then back to the hall (a distance of about 2kilometeres).

The event continued at the Ikaram town hall where the distinguished guests recognized that the IVD programme in the MVP was timely because of the need for greater level of commitment needed for project sustainability. It was emphasized that the key resolution from the event was that the participants need to begin the process of change from themselves; they should desist from unhygienic practices and be the vanguard to carry the message to others in the community.

The programme continued with a documentary on climate change and was followed by a presentation titled “Harmful Effects of Plastic Bags on the Environment” delivered by the UNV Programme Officer Ms. Galina Chus.



The IVD provided an opportunity to champion a tree planting campaign in the cluster as a means of promoting a cleaner and healthier environment. Participants undertook a rally to the ‘millennium market’ in Ikaram community where

eight trees were planted by the Chairman Akoko North West Local Government Area (ANWLGA), Supervisory Councilor, UNV Programme Officer, members of the central cluster committee and the youth president.

## I. Activities related to the IVD

### Seal the Deal Campaign

Seal the Deal, a powerful campaign launched by the United Nations, aimed at encouraging governments to agree to a fair, balanced and effective climate agreement during the United



Nations Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen in December 2009. Climate change affects all of us and Seal the Deal campaign provided an opportunity to individuals and civil society to remind our leaders that they should protect our planet and build a more sustainable, prosperous global economy. **450,810** supporters worldwide

signed the online Seal the Deal petition with **400** Nigerians among them. 22 September 2009, the UN staff went green to show solidarity with the UN campaign, Seal the Deal on Climate Change.

### Volunteering For our Planet (VFOP)

Across the world, people volunteer to protect our planet in many ways. Volunteers started the global environment movement and play the crucial role in addressing the global warming. The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme launched the global campaign 'Volunteering For Our Planet' to promote voluntary effort for the environment. Campaign drew thousands of supporters. Plenty of Nigerians volunteered their time and knowledge to raise public awareness on global warming, improving water quality, minimize waste and clean up and improve local environments.

'Volunteering for our Planet' was the UNV contribution to the UN campaign to Seal the Deal in Copenhagen. Volunteers around the world registered more than **1.5 million hours** of

environmental activities during our campaign, covering the six months to International Volunteer Day, 5 December 2009. According to the VFOP data, Nigeria is among the top five countries - India, Pakistan, Kenya and the Philippines- with the highest number of volunteering hours in Africa. Nigerians have registered **31,647 hours** for our planet! Hours volunteered in the six months to International Volunteer Day, 5 December 2009.

### **Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory**

UNDP is a major contributor to building developing countries capacity to both mitigate and adapt to climate change. In this regard, the UNDP decided to take steps to do a Greenhouse inventory that will help to build a statistically robust global estimate and carbon 'neutralize' his office by elaborating strategies on GHG reduction.

A full GHG inventory has already been completed for UNDP HQ. A select group of COs was asked to contribute inventories. UNDP Nigeria joined other UN country offices in compiling an inventory of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions associated with its building and operations. To better coordinate the exercise, a GHG committee was constituted of four colleagues; they are the Deputy Country Director, UNDP Environmental Team leader, Programme Analyst on Economic Governance and UNV Programme Officer. The committee suggested conducting a GHG inventory pilot exercise within the UNDP office considering the UN dimension. A national UNV was contracted for the period of 6 months to measure the office's GHG emissions and identify sustainable policies to reduce GHG footprint. The result of the exercise revealed that UNDP Nigeria generated **1068.048** tones of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2008. Emissions due to official travel accounts for about half of the total emissions of the country office, followed by the energy consumption (about 16%). The detailed 2008 GHG Inventory result forms the baseline for the Country Office to set and consequently implement emission reduction targets and programs, plan for offset of inevitable carbon emission from its operations and track progress and performance.

A comparative analysis of UNDP Nigeria GHG profile with other UNDP country offices is expected to be finalized at the HQ and shared by January, 2010.

## **Conclusion**

The 2009 IVD celebration, with the message "Volunteer for a Cleaner and Healthier Environment" contributed to creating awareness of Nigerians on volunteerism and climate change effects on the environment.

The International Volunteer Day events in Abuja and Ikaram were covered by the media, namely by the NTA International. It provided an opportunity to create awareness on volunteerism among at least **30 million** of Nigerians at home and in the Diaspora.

Organization of the IVD event in Abuja and Ikaram, production of T-shirts, Toolkit on Volunteerism and reusable bags have been made possible with the financial support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Abuja, namely Governance, Environment units and Millennium Village project in Ikaram.