

SOCIAL SCOPE



SEAP ICSW SOUTHEAST ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL NEWSLETTER. #1 2026

The United Nations has designated 2026 as the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development, emphasizing the vital role of volunteers in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Significance of IVY 2026

The International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development (IVY 2026) is a significant initiative aimed at recognizing and celebrating the contributions of volunteers worldwide. This year will serve as a platform to highlight how volunteerism can drive local solutions and create lasting impacts in communities, thereby accelerating progress towards the SDGs. The UN General Assembly's resolution A/RES/78/127 marks this year as an opportunity to integrate volunteerism into national development strategies and encourage collective action among Member States, civil society, and the private sector.

Themes and Activities

In 2026, the UN will focus on three vital themes, including the role of volunteers in sustainable development. The year will invite dialogue and collaboration among various stakeholders, including governments, communities, and individuals, to engage in volunteerism and its benefits for people and the planet.

Planned Events

The opening event for IVY 2026 will bring together Member States, UN entities, civil society, and academia to elevate the visibility of volunteers. This event will also feature the launch of the **2026 State of the World's Volunteerism Report**, which will set the tone for a year-long global initiative to recognize and advance the contributions of volunteers to global development and resilience.

Call to Action

The IVY 2026 initiative encourages all sectors to pledge concrete actions to operationalize the resolution, such as establishing national committees to lead their International Volunteer Year campaigns. This is a call for collective action and solidarity to address global challenges through volunteerism.

In summary, the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development in 2026 is a pivotal moment to celebrate and enhance the role of volunteers in fostering sustainable development and achieving the SDGs.

A Call to Action for the Future of Volunteering



The United Nations has designated 2026 as the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development, underscoring the pivotal role that volunteerism plays in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs). This global initiative serves as **a call to action**, encouraging nations to recognise and bolster the contributions of volunteers in fostering economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

The Global Call to Action

Volunteerism is a powerful mechanism that bridges communities, empowers individuals, and drives grassroots initiatives. The International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development 2026 aims to:

- Highlight Volunteer Contributions:** Showcase how volunteers address challenges such as poverty, inequality, and climate change, thereby advancing the SDGs.
- Promote Inclusive Participation:** Encourage diverse groups, including marginalised communities, to engage in volunteer activities, ensuring that volunteerism reflects the society it serves.

3. **Strengthen Support Structures:** Urge governments, corporations, and civil society to create environments that facilitate and value volunteer efforts.
4. **Enhance Collaboration:** Foster partnerships across sectors to amplify the impact of volunteer initiatives and share best practices globally.

Implications for Volunteering in Aotearoa New Zealand

In Aotearoa New Zealand, volunteerism is deeply embedded in the cultural fabric, reflecting values of community support and collective responsibility. The 2026 initiative presents an opportunity to:

- **Recognise Volunteer Impact:** Acknowledge the significant contributions of volunteers in areas like disaster response, social services, and environmental conservation.
- **Address Challenges:** Tackle issues such as declining volunteer numbers and the need for more inclusive volunteer opportunities that cater to diverse populations.
- **Leverage Technology:** Utilise digital platforms to connect volunteers with opportunities, especially in remote or underserved communities.

Role of Government

The New Zealand government plays a crucial role in fostering a supportive environment for volunteerism:

- **Policy Development:** Formulate policies that recognise and protect volunteer rights, ensuring that volunteering is accessible and valued.
- **Funding and Resources:** Allocate financial resources and infrastructure to support volunteering infrastructure and volunteer programmes, particularly those addressing critical social and environmental issues.
- **Public Awareness:** Launch campaigns that highlight the importance of volunteerism, encouraging citizen participation and appreciation.

Role of Philanthropy and Civil Society

Philanthropic organisations and civil society are instrumental in:

- **Funding Initiatives:** Provide grants and financial support to volunteering infrastructure and grassroots volunteer projects, enabling innovation and responsiveness to community needs.
- **Capacity Building:** Offer training and development programmes to enhance volunteer skills and effectiveness.
- **Advocacy:** Champion the value of volunteerism in public discourse, influencing policy and societal attitudes.

Role of Corporate and Community Sectors

The corporate and community sectors can significantly contribute by:

- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Develop CSR programmes that encourage employee volunteering and allocate resources to community projects.

- **Partnerships:** Collaborate with non-profits and community groups to address local challenges through combined efforts.
- **Recognition Programmes:** Establish awards and incentives that honor volunteer contributions, motivating continued engagement.

Creating an Enabling Environment for Volunteering

To cultivate a thriving volunteer ecosystem in Aotearoa New Zealand:

- **Inclusive Opportunities:** Design volunteer roles that are accessible to individuals of all backgrounds, abilities, and ages.
- **Flexible Engagement:** Offer diverse volunteering formats, including short-term, virtual, and skills-based opportunities, to accommodate varying lifestyles.
- **Recognition and Support:** Implement systems that acknowledge volunteer efforts and provide necessary support, such as training and resources.

Conclusion

The UN International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development 2026 serves as a catalyst for Aotearoa New Zealand to reaffirm its commitment to volunteerism. By leveraging the collective efforts of the government, philanthropic entities, civil society, and the corporate sector, New Zealand can enhance its volunteer infrastructure, ensuring that volunteerism continues to be a cornerstone of sustainable development and community resilience.

UN General Assembly Proclaims 2026 as the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development

United Nations Volunteers welcomes the historic resolution [A/RES/78/127](#) by the United Nations General Assembly designating the year 2026 as the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development (IVY 2026).

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 2026 the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development. This milestone—achieved through the collaboration of Member States of the General Assembly—offers an opportunity to celebrate volunteers and their contributions on a global stage. As we look ahead to the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development in 2026, let's acknowledge the vital role of volunteers as change-makers who weave through the fabric of the 2030 Agenda, helping to accelerate action in the second half of our journey. Their commitment shapes a world where sustainable development is not merely a goal but a shared reality we create together,” said Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Amina Mohammed.

The United Nations resolution stands as a testament to the unwavering commitment and dedication of volunteers across diverse sectors, advocating for

positive change and actively shaping a sustainable future. As the world prepares for the final push towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, this recognition amplifies the role that volunteers play in driving meaningful progress for the future.

The International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development in 2026 is a call for UN Member States to make volunteerism an integral cog in their development pathways to drive forward the Global Goals -- and a recognition that only through collective action and solidarity can we summon the strength to address the challenges that affect us all," said UNDP Administrator, Achim Steiner.

United Nations Volunteers extends heartfelt gratitude to co-sponsoring countries for their instrumental support.

Volunteering is where passion meets solidarity. As the UN General Assembly calls upon Member States and other stakeholders to recognize volunteers as a global force for change, we hope that passion will meet solidarity in every single corner of the world. UNV is grateful to the General Assembly for its confidence and is getting ready for 2026 as the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development," said UNV Executive Coordinator, Toily Kurbanov.

As we look ahead to 2026, United Nations Volunteers stands poised to collaborate, innovate, and amplify the voices and actions of volunteers towards a more equitable and sustainable world.



Issued by Mohammed Hassan Khan

VP & VOLUNTEER Editor for ICSW –SEAP (South East Asia Pacific Region)

Kindly Share the learning and information.