

UPF International: Toward Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development

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As we approach 2026, the Universal Peace Federation embraces the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development. Proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly, this year is a global call to expand the contribution of volunteers to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The resolution was initiated by the Republic of Kazakhstan and co-sponsored by over fifty UN member states. Kazakhstan also became the first nation to establish a National Committee for IVY 2026, engaging government, civil society, and UN agencies in joint planning.

The timing is critical. We are at the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda. Volunteerism awakens empathy, builds cohesion, and invites ownership.

The United Nations emphasizes that volunteers are indispensable to development. Member states are encouraged to integrate volunteerism into national SDG strategies. The UN Volunteers program (UNV) coordinates the year's observance and will work with governments, NGOs, and volunteers to track progress and share success stories.

Key global events include:

The 28th [IAVE](#) World Volunteer Conference;

Regional forums such as the Council of Europe's [INGOs Committee for IVY 2026](#);

UN-led observances including the [High-Level Political Forum](#) and national [SDG reviews](#).

UPF affirms that peace begins with living for the sake of others. As an NGO in general consultative status with ECOSOC, we see volunteerism as a moral ethos rooted in interdependence and shared humanity.

Our Religious Youth Service ([RYS](#)) has conducted relief projects in over 70 countries, mobilizing interfaith youth teams for community service. In addition, UPF chapters have conducted relief-focused volunteer projects in Lebanon, Malaysia, Haiti, Pakistan, India, Japan, Thailand, and many others. Through joint work and dialogue, participants grow into peacebuilders. UPF chapters also have conducted humanitarian outreach, flood relief in Asia, health campaigns in Africa, educational and environmental initiatives in Europe and the Americas. These efforts reflect our vision: volunteerism as a foundation for peace.

In preparation for the International Year of Volunteers, we encourage our global community to launch meaningful volunteer activities in 2025. These initiatives can be shared on International Volunteer Day, December 5, 2025, as a prelude to 2026.

We urge all Ambassadors for Peace, national chapters, and partners to act:

Engage in IVY 2026 initiatives: Partner with national committees, UN agencies, and civil society. Where no formal IVY structure exists, help establish one.

Organize value-driven projects: Clean-ups, interfaith youth camps, or mentoring initiatives - every act of service matters.

Promote volunteerism publicly: Share stories, spotlight local heroes, and reframe volunteering as a civic duty.

Ensure inclusivity: Involve marginalized groups, women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

Cooperate with the UN and NGOs: Work with UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, IAVE, and Red Cross/Crescent societies.

The world is turning its attention to volunteerism. Let us respond with meaningful action. UPF must be a beacon of values-based service. Let 2026 be the year the spirit of service spreads further than ever. Let us rebuild the culture of peace through compassionate action. This is our moment to act. This is our time to lead.