



Celebration of the 2010 International Volunteer Day

Volunteering for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)



Over 100 volunteers joined hands in coastal clean-up and mangrove planting in Samoa



Volunteers passing on seaweed and debris to clear areas for mangrove planting

On 4th December 2010 in marking the International Volunteer Day (IVD), over 100 local and international volunteers joined hands in cleaning up and planting mangroves in Fasitootai, northwest of the Samoa's Upolu Island. The event was organized by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme in cooperation with the Fasitootai village, the Government of Samoa, other United Nations agencies and various local and international volunteer-involving organizations including Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organizations (SUNGO), Samoa Red Cross Society, Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID) and US Peace Corps.

The yearly International Volunteer Day provides an opportunity for organizations and individual volunteers to celebrate their invaluable contributions in communities worldwide. This year the celebration focuses on the theme, *Volunteering for the Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs). The MDGs are a

set of objectives that include halving poverty and ensuring environment sustainability by 2015.

"Through volunteering, people provide a much needed vehicle for improving the lives of their fellow citizens, especially those vulnerable and marginalized groups." said Nileema Noble, United Nations Resident Coordinator and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative in her opening remark of the event. Echoing this, Deputy Prime Minister Misa Telefoni Retzlaff emphasized the important role volunteers play in helping Samoa attaining its 2015 MDG targets. He said, "We have to build on our strong traditions, the *faa Samoa*, which emphasizes social cohesiveness and reciprocity. But more importantly, we need to encourage more Samoans, women and men, young and old, to volunteer outside of their family obligations."

Building on the theme of volunteering for the MDGs, this year's celebration supported the Community-Based Adaptation Programme (CBA), a five-year United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) global initiative funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) within the Small Grants Programme (SGP) delivery mechanism.



Samoa's Deputy Prime Minister Misa Telefoni: "We need to encourage more Samoans to volunteer outside of family obligations"

Pacific is one of the most vulnerable regions to the adverse impacts of climate change. Thus achieving the MDGs is made more challenging. "Fasitootai is facing severe coastal erosion



Kevin Petrini, UNDP/Global Environment Fund Community-Based Adaptation Project Coordinator: "Today's activity is a big boost to our project in the village."

from both local and climate change induced stresses. The project aims to build coastal resilience in the face of climate change by planting mangroves. This not only protects the coastline but is also a key ecosystem which the village relies upon for subsistence fishing and livelihoods," said Kevin Petrini, CBA regional programme coordinator.



Ale Pule Lauina, a primary school principal: "We need to educate our fellow villagers, old and young, about the importance of mangrove conservation"

"We are working closely with the Samoa's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the Fasitootai community. The target is to, plant 5,000 square meters of eroded area with mangroves, renovate village water resources and establish mangrove and coral reef protection areas", Kevin added. The coastal clean-up and mangrove planting event not only brought together community members from the village, but also voluntary groups from the capital city of Apia and the

neighboring villages. "We have done similar clean-up in our village and now we want to help our neighbors", said Vaisilika (Silk Water) group from Falesiu village. The event also gathered foreign volunteers in Samoa from Australia, China, France, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Sweden and USA.



A sustainable environment relies on concerted and coordinated efforts within the community



Rose (left), Vaisilika group of Falesasiu village and Yasu, Japanese volunteer: "Given

"We are so moved by the spirit of volunteerism. Today's activity is a real boost to our project. We will take ownership from now and continue to mobilize our village women and men, old and young, to build a more sustainable Fasitootai," said Rev Elder Lale Ieremia, Fasitootai's CBA village committee member.



"Thanks to the local and international volunteers. Our village will take it forward to conserve our mangrove and coral reef ecosystems," says Rev Elder Lale Ieremia (left), Fasitootai Community-Based Adaptation Project committee member as Nileema Noble, UN Resident Coordinator shovels the sand around her plant.

In less than two hours, thanks to the tireless and coordinated efforts, the volunteers cleared about 10,000 sq meters of Fasitootai's coastline from seaweed and debris and planted 250 mangrove seedlings.



Villagers putting aside chores for Sunday's Umu preparation to come help clear seaweed and replant mangrove



Volunteers from Vaisilika group, Faleasiu village: "We have done similar coastal clean-up in our village and now we want to help our neighbours"

About United Nations Volunteers

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide. Volunteerism is a powerful means of engaging people in tackling development challenges, and it can transform the pace and nature of development. Volunteerism benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer by strengthening trust, solidarity and reciprocity among citizens, and by purposefully creating opportunities for participation. UNV contributes to peace and development by advocating for recognition of volunteers, working with partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing an increasing number and diversity of volunteers, including experienced UNV volunteers, throughout the world. UNV embraces volunteerism as universal and inclusive, and recognizes volunteerism in its diversity as well as the values that sustain it: free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity.

For more information, visit: www.undp.org.ws

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