



Immediate Release

Volunteering Matters – o le ala I le pule, o le tautua

3 December 2011, Poutasi Samoa – Samoa National Volunteer Committee (SNVC), comprising of United Nations Volunteers (UNV), AusAid, JICA, Peace Corps, Samoa Red Cross Society (SRCS), Samoa Umbrella of Non Governmental Organisations (SUNGO), Volunteer Sending Association (VSA) of New Zealand and many others, celebrated the International Volunteer Day (IVD) 2011 at Poutasi. Since 2011 is the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10), which was designated in 2001 when volunteerism was globally recognized as a contribution in development, the spirit of volunteerism has been reinvigorated through national and global campaigns all over the world. Hence, SNVC has been running various events throughout 2011 to celebrate this memorable year.

The celebration day started with the opening remarks by Ms. Nileema Noble, the United Nations Resident Coordinator and the UNDP Resident Representative. She strengthened that volunteering should be included in all kinds of development and emphasized the prominent role of young people in volunteering activities. She also mentioned that the governments of Samoa parish –Samoa, Tokelau, Niue and Cook Islands, has endorsed to include local volunteers to be involved in different projects.

Using this great opportunity, she did a pre-launch of the United Nations first ever report on volunteerism, the State of the World's Volunteerism Report, which will officially be launched on 5 December in New York.

Finally, Ms. Noble appreciated Mr. Katsuhiko Sasaki, the resident representative of JICA and Ms. Vaasilifiti Moelagi Jackson from SUNGO of their presence. In addition to that, the outstanding hospitality and services of Poutasi villagers, almost 50 volunteers from eight different volunteer sending organizations and church groups and the UN families who joined this day.

From the representative of Non-Governmental Organizations, Ms. Jackson (SUNGO) gave a very moving speech. A long time volunteer herself, she spoke of volunteerism as an integral part of the Samoan culture making specific reference to the service provided by the different members of the family and communities. She challenged the international volunteers to be reminded of why they have chosen to dedicate their time, skills and talents and asked the local volunteers why there were there to engage with various kinds of services. She finally made a reference that volunteer means 'agent of change', therefore volunteers are supposed to inspire change of family, communities and churches.

As Ms. Jackson mentioned, the term volunteering has been used widely in the world although it is difficult to make exact translation in Samoan. This was also discussed in



volunteer committee and thus the committee focused on the Samoan saying 'O le ala i le pule, o le tautua', which means the road to the top is through service. Based on this mutual goal, the celebration day became unforgettable and crucial for the Samoan people and the volunteers (national and international).

Followed by the two outstanding keynote speeches, the core objective of the celebration day, which was to formally appreciate all the services done by volunteers and individuals were awarded certificates. Prior to this day, nomination forms were distributed to various organizations, church groups, schools etc, and each community groups and organizations nominated two persons who have done a brilliant work. These nominees were invited and all the volunteers who participated received certificates and prizes from Ms. Noble.

The celebration day ended with Samoan foods provided by the Poutasi villagers and the participants sang and dance in the big open fale in front of the sea. This year should be commemorated not only to appreciate and recognize the hard work by volunteers, but also to refocus the Samoan hospitality, which again has been demonstrated by the Poutasi villagers.

Background

Poutasi was selected to be this year's venue since it is one of the fields of Community Centred Sustainable Development Program (CCSDP). The intention of the celebration day was not only to do fun activities but also to take initiative and acknowledge the impact of volunteering.

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International
Volunteer Day



International Year of Volunteers
10th Anniversary
2011



Picture 1: 200 T-Shirts were distributed to the villagers and all the participants.



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International Year of Volunteers
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Picture 2: Future volunteer.



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Picture 3: Keynote speech by Ms. Noble.

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Picture 4: Speech from the representative of NGOs, Ms. Jackson, who has long been engaged with volunteering herself.



Picture 5: Certificates and prizes were given to all the volunteers who participated and to those who were nominated by various community groups, churches, schools etc.



Picture 6: People dancing in the fale. Siva Samoa.