

**NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT****PARTICIPATION OF THE OPCW
IN THE UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME**

1. At its Third Special Session to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Conference of the States Parties “Encouraged the Secretariat to continue its efforts to be more compact, flexible, and efficient, optimising its use of human and financial resources while ensuring that sufficient resources are available to support the effective implementation of the Convention” (subparagraph 9.155(k) of RC-3/3*, dated 19 April 2013).
2. In order to pursue these efforts and deliver results with greater agility, performance, and shared responsibility for results, the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) has been continuously reviewing its human resources strategies. One recent step in that process has been the introduction of a Junior Professional Officer Programme at the OPCW (S/1513/2017, dated 10 July 2017). Presently, to further the cooperation with the United Nations system, the Secretariat is exploring the possibility of partnering with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme to mobilise United Nations Volunteers to serve for assignments with the Secretariat.
3. The UNV programme was created by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1970 to serve as an operational partner in development cooperation at the request of United Nations Member States.¹ It reports to the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme. United Nations Volunteers are as diverse as the projects they support. They originate from over 150 countries, range from 18 to over 70 years of age, and represent over 100 different professional areas. Volunteers represent a rich variety of languages, cultures, and ethnicities. United Nations Volunteers serve in their home countries and abroad; on short- and long-term assignments; and directly after attaining their qualifications, mid-career, or after retirement. Different categories of United Nations Volunteers are available, each with its own characteristics, allowing flexible solutions to the needs of United Nations organisations.
4. In 2016, the UNV programme started offering the on-site placement of skilled United Nations Volunteers within the United Nations system to support headquarters duty stations. This service has been designed to increase the quantity and diversity of

¹ United Nations General Assembly resolution 2659 (XXV), adopted on 7 December 1970.



opportunities for interested parties to volunteer as peace and development actors in advancing the mandates of United Nations entity partners.

5. There is a strongly gendered element to volunteerism and by affirmatively promoting gender equality in recruitment and programming tools, the UNV programme offers a contribution to promoting and increasing gender equality in peace and development, including the broader United Nations system. Furthermore, the UNV programme mobilises over 80% of its human capital from the Global South and, thus, contributes to strengthening the role of the Global South in the work of the United Nations system at large.
6. The UNV modality is a very cost-effective, short-term staffing modality as compared to special-services agreements, for example. United Nations Volunteers are working in virtually all United Nations entities as an alternative staffing modality throughout the United Nations system.
7. A United Nations Volunteer specialist is a professional who may be recruited to work outside his/her country of nationality for his/her readiness to serve under volunteer conditions without financial benefit. This would allow the Secretariat to have access to a cost-effective, high-quality, and quickly available talent pool, so as to attain a more effective and agile workforce to drive the formulation and achievement of the Organisation's strategic objectives.
8. As an initial step, the Secretariat intends to pilot the UNV programme within existing resources. Once the pilot is completed, the Secretariat will evaluate this initiative and assess whether an institutional partnership consolidated in a memorandum of understanding between the OPCW and UNV would be in the interest of the Organisation.

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