

**Statement during the United Nations 2022 ECOSOC Partnership Forum  
2 February 2022**

**Plenary Session 2  
5-5:50 PM EST**

Statement by: Mr. David Styers, Coordinator, Volunteer Groups Alliance  
<https://volunteergroupsalliance.org/>

As part of the Major Groups and other Stakeholders, the Volunteers stakeholder group coordinates a global coalition of more than 70 volunteer groups that contribute to sustainable development through volunteering and works to gain recognition for the important role volunteers play at local, regional, and national levels and in UN processes.

There can be no silver lining from the horrific impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had around the globe in terms of the tragic loss of millions of human lives, the hundreds of millions of illnesses, and the disruption of daily existence for us all. But if there is a bronze lining, it is how volunteers, like in many times of trouble before, have rallied to help their communities face these challenges together and support those most in need.

As stated in UN Resolution 75/233, “Volunteering is a powerful and cross-cutting means of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” A conducive environment for volunteering enhances our efforts to build back better from COVID-19 while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. When people are encouraged to get involved in solving problems, the solutions are more likely to be feasible and lasting.

By volunteering, people take action to improve not only the lives of those around them but their lives as well. It is important, now more than ever, to integrate volunteers and the spirit of volunteering into national and global implementation strategies and to build an inclusive world. Volunteers not only help in times of immediate need but raise awareness and champion change needed for tomorrow.

UN Member States, please ensure that volunteers are at the heart of efforts to respond, rebuild, and recover from the pandemic and that volunteering provides those furthest behind with opportunities for greater ownership in the decade of action for the SDGs.

--David Styers, Coordinator, Volunteer Groups Alliance <https://volunteergroupsalliance.org/>