



Thank you. I am a VSO volunteer from Uganda, working with the Girls Education Challenge project in Mozambique. I work with five volunteers to train and build the capacity of 234 teachers, 2106 girls, and 819 school council members on gender responsive ways of achieving better education opportunities for girls. We volunteers work with the local community on sensitization and advocacy campaigns on the value of girls' education.

Having listened to the negotiations this week, if you asked me 'what are the Means of Implementation?' I might say 'well there are two – money and technology'. But I know from my own experience that these are not the only things needed for this agenda to be implemented successfully.

It is important to use this opportunity to focus on more than financial means of implementation; to talk about investment in and support for **people-led** approaches to development. The Zero Draft of the Outcome Document on Financing for Development refers to 'unlocking the transformative potential of people'. As volunteer groups we welcome this, but we call on Member States to strengthen the section on technology, innovation and capacity building to reflect this, and to look beyond technology and recognise social innovation and investment in building human resource capacity.

In doing this, we should also recognise the complementary role that volunteers can play in supporting more people-centred implementation. The Secretary General's Synthesis Report recognised volunteerism as a 'powerful and cross-cutting means of implementation'. Volunteers extend the reach and relevance of services to the most marginalised communities, beyond the reach of formal systems. They empower people to move from being passive beneficiaries to being active participants in their own development; volunteering is often the first step on the road to becoming actively engaged in your community, and empowered to realise your rights.

However, volunteers are **not** a cost-free delivery mechanism or a cheap form of labour. To be effective and sustainable, volunteering must be supported by investment in capacity building and embedding support structures at national and local level, and volunteers, like civil society, people's movements, and citizens themselves, should be included in decision making processes about how development is delivered.

I leave you with a final observation from my work on empowering girls through education. Every day I see that women and girls suffer the most from poverty, marginalisation and exclusion. There will be no hope of achieving any of these goals unless gender empowerment is achieved in a meaningful sense. **This week we want to see agreement on achieving gender equality matched by dedicated resources.** Member States should establish robust systems to track allocations for gender equality through disaggregated

data, and address areas of underfunding in women's rights, gender equality and women's empowerment.

Thank you.

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