

**Press Release:**  
**“United Nations Volunteers and Thailand International Cooperation Agency  
bring partners together to strengthen South-South Cooperation  
between ASEAN countries on youth volunteering”**

20 June 2017

Bangkok, Thailand

Today, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Programme and Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) jointly organized Conference on “South-South Knowledge Exchange on Youth Volunteering for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Sharing SEP and Other Approaches from ASEAN Countries”. This conference will be held from 20-23 June 2017 in Bangkok.

TICA and UNV have been cooperating with ASEAN member countries to promote South-South volunteerism as a key modality to tackle youth development challenges and harness the opportunities created by engaging ASEAN youth.

As chair of the Group of 77 for 2016, Thailand had worked with G77 members and development partners to strengthen South – South Cooperation and share its home-grown approach based on ‘Sufficiency Economy Philosophy’ (SEP) to promote sustainable development. Through the framework of SEP, which was developed by the late His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Thailand has been promoting people-centered development and resilience that align with the SDGs and resonate with volunteerism’s core values of mutuality and solidarity. Youth volunteering in SEP projects is recognized as an important channel for Thai youth to develop human and social capital and harness their energy, skills, and innovative thinking for sustainable development.

With the focus on youth volunteering through the framework of South-South Cooperation, the conference brings together more than 100 representatives from ASEAN member countries, volunteer-involving organizations, academics, and UN entities to share best practices and identify challenges and opportunities for volunteerism to become a driving force for sustainable development across the ASEAN region and beyond.

Along with plenary sessions, moderated panel discussions and small group discussions, the four-day conference includes a story-sharing session from volunteers, and a field visit to share best practices and lessons learned in developing and implementing volunteer programmes and initiatives. Thirty young volunteer innovators from ASEAN countries, who were selected to participate in the “IMPACT ASEAN Youth Volunteering Innovation Challenge,” will also present their projects to leverage volunteerism to achieve SDGs in their countries.

*/... “As a country of the South and as the ASEAN-UN Coordinator*

*“As a country of the South and as the ASEAN-UN Coordinator for Sustainable Development, Thailand is pleased to co-host this forum with UNV to strengthen the cooperation among ASEAN countries and beyond through sharing and learning experiences and ideas to promote the value of youth volunteering for sustainable development.”* said Mrs. Suphatra Srimaitreephithak, Director-General of TICA. *“Volunteering is deeply embedded in the Thai community and Sufficiency Economy Philosophy emphasizes the importance of sustainability, moderation and social cohesion. The people-to-people connection is one of the fundamental aspects of peace and development, and I am looking forward to exploring the possibility of expanding the role of volunteerism for sustainable development in this region.”*

UNV Chief Programme Coordinator Alexandra Solovieva, who is also attending the conference, added “South-South Cooperation is the key to achieving the SDGs because it can unlock untapped innovation, knowledge, and resources. This is especially true in volunteering since many ASEAN countries have already been establishing policies and schemes to bring out larger positive impacts through volunteering activities. We hope the knowledge exchanged and created through the conference will be stepping stones to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships in this region.”

### **About UNV**

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide. UNV works with its partners to integrate qualified, highly motivated and well supported UN Volunteers into development programming and promote the value and global recognition of volunteerism.

UNV is active in around 130 countries. With a field presence in over 80 countries, UNV is represented worldwide. UNV is administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

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Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA)  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
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