

**Tenth Anniversary of International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10): Preparation,
Implementation and Achievements of the Celebrations in Nepal**

Kumar Khadka
National Coordinator for IYV+10 and
Secretary of National Steering Committee for Volunteerism Nepal (NSCVN)/NPC

Volunteerism is an integral part of traditional Nepalese culture which makes it a great example of a country that showcases true spirit of volunteerism. People of local communities have always come together to jointly carry out various tasks to the mutual benefit of the society. In this recent time volunteerism has taken new shapes and forms and became one of the most important means for supporting the process of development and peace in the country, as the large number of volunteers serve in various peace and development projects and programmes across the country.

The idea for *International Year of Volunteers (IYV)* emerged in the early 1990s. UN General Assembly held on November 20, 1997 passed a resolution and proclaimed 2001 as International Year of Volunteers based on the proposal sponsored by the Government of Japan and co-sponsored by 123 countries including Nepal. Aimed at increased recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion of volunteering, the IYV 2001 provided a unique opportunity to showcase the achievements made through the services of millions of volunteers. IYV 2001 was launched in Nepal by organizing a National Volunteer Exhibition from December 17-18, 2000 in Bhrikutimandap, Kathmandu.

UN General Assembly Resolution of 2008 reaffirmed the significance of volunteerism for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and called for the marking of the *Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10)* in 2011. The UNGA Resolution invited governments, media, civil society, the private sector, development partners and the UN to mark IYV+10 at the global, regional and national levels and United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Programme was designated as the Global Focal Point for the Year's preparation, implementation and follow-up. To this end, the UN member states were obliged to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10) as an expression of common humanity.

Nepal is one of the proudest country for IYV+10 celebration and the country is honoured and inspired as IYV+10 is officially launched in Nepal for the Asian Region from the forum of National Volunteering Conference 2010 organized on the occasion of International Volunteer Day of 5th December 2010.

The IYV+10 celebrations were used by Nepal as an opportunity to celebrate the essence of volunteerism and also to assess the progress made towards achieving the four objectives of IYV+10; namely, Recognition, Facilitation, Networking and Promotion. Nepal's key objectives of the IYV+10 campaigns were to achieve broaden networking with the government and other stakeholders by advocating the importance and relevance of volunteerism to achieving MDGs and providing opportunities of engaging more institutions and individuals through IYV+10 celebration.

In relation to the marking of IYV+10 and strengthen the use of volunteerism as a strategic resource to achieve development effectiveness in Nepal, National Planning Commission (NPC) with the facilitation of United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Programme, established *National Steering Committee for Volunteerism Nepal (NSCVN)*. This national committee acted as the formal government body which provided the leadership at national level for the IYV+10 campaigning.

NSCVN is comprised of 12 member organizations with 13 members chaired by National Planning Commission. Member organizations of NSCVN are National Development Volunteer Service (NDVS), Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, United National Volunteers (UNV) Programme, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO), Youth NGO Federation Nepal, Nepal Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FNCCI) and Returned United Nations Volunteers Association of Nepal (RUNVAN). The committee developed a multi-stakeholder national plan of action to mark IYV+10 in Nepal and played a key role in the celebration urging and encouraging other institutions and organizations to participate.

The overall activities of the national committee in 2011 were plugged into the overall strategy of government to celebrate the essence of volunteerism to human development and creating enabling environment for citizen engagement through the development of supportive volunteer legislation and infrastructure.

As part of the IYV+10 campaign, national steering committee organized a launching ceremony of first ever “State of the World’s Volunteerism Report (SWVR) 2011” commissioned by United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Programme. Rt. Hon’ble President of Nepal, Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, officially launched the report in a very high level programme in the Office of the President of Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal on 5 December 2011.



Rt. Hon'ble President of Nepal, Dr. Ram Baran Yadav launching the report in Nepal

The ceremony was chaired by Prof. Dr. Shiba Kumar Rai, Hon'ble member of National Planning Commission and chair of National Steering Committee for Volunteerism Nepal (NSCVN). Hon'ble Vice-Chair of National Planning Commission, Mr. Deependra Bahadur Kshetry was chaired as the special guest in the event. Secretary of National Planning Commission, Mr. Yuba Raj Bhusal, Secretary of President’s Office, Mr. Baman Prasad Neupane, Country Director of UNDP, Ms. Shoka Nada and Programme Officer of UNV, Mr. Christian Simmelkiaer were also

present in the dais as the guests. Secretaries of different ministries, heads of different government agencies, NGOs/INGOs including VSAs/ VRAs and journalists from different media houses took part in the event.

The national steering committee also organized *National Volunteering Conference 2011* on December 5, 2011. Rt. Hon'ble President of Nepal, Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, officially inaugurated this conference in President House in the launching ceremony of "State of the World's Volunteerism Report 2011". Hon'ble Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare, Mr. Dan Bahadur Chaudhary, officially started the conference with his kind presence in Hotel De l'Annapurna, Kathmandu, Nepal.



In the photo from Left: Secretary of Women, Children & Social Welfare Ministry, Mr. Ananda Raj Pokharel, Former Vice-Chair of NPC, Dr. Jagadish Chandra Pokharel, Hon'ble Member of NPC and Chair of NSCVN, Prof. Dr. Shiba Kumar Rai, Hon'ble Minister for Women, Children & Social Welfare, Mr. Dan Bahadur Chaudhary, UNV Programme Officer, Mr. Christian Simmelkiaer, Director of NDVS, Mr. Jagannath Adhikari, Chief Representative of JICA, Mr. Mitsuyoshi Kawasaki, and Resident Representative of KOICA, Ms. Young-Ah Doh.

This conference was the first of its kind, bringing together leadership and decision makers from governments, humanitarian and development organizations, civil society, academia, the UN system and the corporate sector. The theme of the conference was "Volunteering for MDGs". This conference was the highlight of International Volunteer Day 2011 and the culmination of IYV+10 celebrations in Nepal which provided an opportunity to look at the past, present and future of volunteerism in Nepal and tried to identify as well as examine ways to ensure the ongoing sustainability of volunteering service sector.

Similarly, the Volunteer Caravan was launched across the country with the objective to promote volunteerism and its contribution to achieve MDGs in Nepal which was also focused on building national as well as local networking and collaboration. It was the unique concept adopted by the national steering committee to mark IYV+10.



Hon'ble Vice-Chair of National Planning Commission, Mr. Deependra Bahadur Kshetry and UN Resident Representative and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Robert Piper jointly taking part in the volunteer caravan after the inauguration.

The volunteer caravan was started from Kathmandu followed by regional volunteer caravans in seven major cities across Nepal: From Dhangadi to Nepalgunj in the Far-Western Region; From Ilam to Damak and to Biratnagar in the Eastern Region; and From Pokhara to Hetauda in Central Region of Nepal. The main idea of volunteer caravan was gathering of thousands of volunteers in 8 big cities of 5 development regions of Nepal and marching the whole city symbolizing separate MDGs in every city followed by small interaction meeting with local stakeholders in the same location in the same day.

As the first city and capital, in Kathmandu, there was a grand inaugural session with huge march pass of volunteers. The volunteer caravan was kicked off in the astounding morning of December 05, 2011 in the huge presence of volunteers and dignitaries from government authorities, VSAs/VRAs, NGOs, civil society organizations, schools, colleges and private sector. Hon'ble Vice-Chair of NPC, Mr. Deependra Bahadur Kshetry and United Nations Resident Representative and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Robert Piper jointly launched and inaugurated volunteer caravan in Kathmandu.

The major reason of this huge successful IYV+10 events in Nepal was multi-stakeholder involvement strategy and joint-flagship with different national and international stakeholders including government counterparts, UN Agencies, NGOs, INGOs, as well as CSOs. All the member organizations of national steering committee actively participated in the events. The national steering committee coordinated and communicated with most of the volunteering stakeholders including ministries, other government agencies/departments, NGOs, INGOs, Civil Societies and Media houses for the implementation of each and every activity listed in national plan of action. Therefore; a strong relationship has been built by this IYV+10 campaigning and now most of the national volunteering stakeholders are interested to work in the national level volunteering campaign.

The yearlong IYV+10 celebrations with major high level events has brought so many positive changes and addressed many issues of volunteerism in Nepal. The mind set of authorities and people has been changing and the acceptance level has been enhanced. A strong partnership with all kinds of institutes has been established for volunteering. IYV+10 campaigns also deepened and broadened the debate about volunteerism in Nepal as it has increased the awareness level of people and government on volunteering.

As the recent developments in relation to volunteering, NPC has been drafting Nepal's first ever *National Volunteer Mobilization Policy* and conducting a study for the functional and structural restructuring of National Development Volunteer Service (NDVS) which will make it an umbrella organization and resource center for volunteering in Nepal.