



**Message from Mr. Richard Dictus,
Executive Coordinator, United Nations Volunteers Programme**

on the occasion of
the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V)
1-3 June, 2013, Yokohama, Japan

**Promoting Youth Volunteering for
People-centered Inclusive and Sustainable Development**



Volunteering especially among youth is recognized as a relevant means to accelerate people-centered inclusive and sustainable development in Africa. Volunteerism offers valuable opportunities for youth engagement, participation and leadership to contribute to the development of peaceful and inclusive societies. It also allows young people to acquire skills and knowledge to become active leaders and responsible citizens, build their own capacities, increase their employability and serves as a positive agent for community and nation building.

Volunteerism cuts across the three major themes of TICAD V, namely “Robust and Sustainable Economy”, “Inclusive and Resilient Society” and “Peace and Stability”. Volunteering provides the rapidly growing number of African youth with a platform to enhance their active involvement in community development, nurture their sense of belonging, strengthen social inclusion, help build resilient and coherent society, engage in community-based climate change adaptation, disaster preparedness and post-disaster recover, as well as contribute towards post-conflict reconciliation and peace building. Volunteering unleashes often untapped talents and energy of African youth, thereby mobilizing their willingness and energy to engage in shaping a sustainable, inclusive and peaceful Africa.

Throughout the TICAD process, UNV has been advocating for volunteerism for and with youth in Africa as it is an important part of the global UN Youth Volunteer Programme which UNV has worked to develop for a year since the Secretary-General’s announcement of a Five-Year Action Agenda focusing on youth. While my participation in the TICAD conference in Yokohama, Japan on 1-3 June 2013, UNV will organize an official side event “Youth Development through Volunteering for Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa” on the 2nd June (1730-1900 hrs. at Annex Hall, PACIFICO Yokohama) to discuss the significance of youth volunteering in Africa with the audiences and stakeholders. The panelists of the event include Japanese youth volunteers from TICAD V Student Project, the African Union Youth Volunteer Corp, a representative of the African Union Commission, an African NGO and my UN colleague.

Let us join hands to strengthen our partnership with the regional organizations and the governments in Africa, donors, CSOs and youth volunteers themselves to create a better enabling environment for youth volunteers in Africa!