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**INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE PILOT PHASE OF
ECOWAS VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME**

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FINAL REPORT

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	African Development Bank
ANS	Antenatal survey
CCC	Country coordinating council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EVP	ECOWAS Volunteers Programme
GBV	Gender-based violence
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NCC	National Coordinating Council
NGO	Non- Governmental Organization
PASD	Poverty alleviation strategy document
PBM	Performance-based management
RANS	Realigned antenatal survey
RCC	Regional coordinating Council
TOR	Terms of reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNVP	United Nations Volunteers Programme
UNVs	United Nations Volunteers
YSDC	Youth and Sports Development Centre

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After going thoroughly through the technical, administrative and financial documents, and the interviews carried out with about sixty people, including staff members of the Regional Coordinating Office of the ECOWAS Volunteers Programme, members of National coordinating councils, Country-coordinating councils, Government authorities of beneficiary member States, leaders of volunteers host structures, Officials of ECOWAS, and of the United Nations Volunteers Programme, and ECOWAS Volunteers, the evaluation team believes that, all in all, the pilot phase of the ECOWAS Volunteers Programme performed well, if we rely on the five classic evaluation criteria used.

Good implementation of the immediate objectives of the EVP (Effectiveness of the Programme)

The four immediate objectives of the Programme were largely achieved. First of all, as regards the deployment of volunteers, a total of 96 volunteers were actually deployed in the three pilot countries: Liberia (20 volunteers, including one who resigned soon after getting to the field, the actual figure being 19 volunteers); Guinea (40 volunteers), and Sierra Leone (36 volunteers); this stands for 80% of the expected total number of 120 volunteers. The political situation in Bissau Guinea could not allow to start the activities of the Programme therein. If we restrict ourselves to the two countries covered by the evaluation mission, we can actually number 29 volunteers in Guinea and 15 in Sierra Leone. All volunteers in the health sector in Sierra Leone were on technical leave, because of the Ebola fever.

57.7% of volunteers, (23 teachers) in Guinea work in Education (teachers of science-mathematics, chemistry and physics), 40% (16) work in the health sector (nurses, midwives, surgeons, laboratory technicians and first aid workers), and 2.5% (one female youth capacity building expert) work in the sector of youth development (project development and NGO capacity building).

55% of volunteers in Sierra Leone work in the area of Education, including 85% of French teachers (17 volunteers) and 15% are science teachers (3 volunteers-mathematics, chemistry, physics and biology); and 45% of volunteers are in the health sector (2 dentists, 3 optometrists, 1 physician and 10 nurses).

ECOWAS volunteers come from 12 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. 70% of volunteers are men, and 30% are women, aged 25 to 35 years.

The mission believes, however, that the deployment in itself was not efficient, because of many difficulties which did not make the quick integration of volunteers easy. In all pilot countries, host institutions and bodies were not prepared to receive the volunteers despite the fact that pre-

deployment visits were organized to make sure that decent accommodation conditions were met before their arrival. Some host structures were not even aware that the Programme existed, as the information was centralized.

The specific objective, which consisted in giving constructive leadership opportunities to the young volunteers was equally achieved satisfactorily. Volunteers who were deployed benefited from the induction training which made them become familiar with not only the context of their work, the basic principles of voluntary work, voluntary work experience in the West African Region, and the structuring of ECOWAS, but it also made them develop practical skills to further change and peace through presentations on the leadership concept and approach, the management of stress, conflict management, practical advice for them to succeed in their professional lives, as well as the instilling of values which underpin the culture of peace (effectiveness, diversity, involvement, transparency, honesty, excellence, etc.).

In addition, wherever they were posted, ECOWAS volunteers undertook projects for change and mobilised the youth around issues of public interest, such as cleaning up public places, awareness campaigns on HIV/AIDS and malaria control, early pregnancies, unwanted births and violence. In schools, they motivated students to learn and succeed in science subjects, as well as in the study of the French language.

As regards the specific objective relating to the placing of the youth in organizations in order to build their capacities, ECOWAS volunteers are in remote schools in which they teach science subjects, in addition to French in Sierra Leone. They work in medical facilities and hospitals where they build the technical capacities of their colleagues, deliver pregnant women, handle departments, deliver ante-natal care, operate on patients, provide family planning services and contribute to foster care quality. They work with youth organizations by assisting them in developing bankable projects.

Finally, with respect to the specific objective which consists in furthering the culture of peace and development, ECOWAS volunteers organize awareness raising caravans during which they do advocacy for social cohesion, unity in diversity, tolerance, collaboration among ethnic groups and national reconciliation, which are key values for peace building and furthering and for development. They are involved in conflict resolution within their host organizations and communities.

The achievement of these immediate objectives resulted in the materialization of all of the effects or impact expected from the EVP.

Good achievement of the effects/impact expected from the Programme

Effect 1: Opportunities given to the youth to contribute to further peace through voluntary work

Nearly 99% of volunteers of the EVP believe that the Programme provided them with significant advantages. It gave them the opportunity to help other people, to contribute to foster educational and health methods and practices, to build the capacities of their colleagues and of youth organizations, and to consolidate, within their host organizations and communities, the values of unity, of tolerance, of the significance of forgiveness, of collaboration among ethnic groups, of the passion for work and, of the commitment to public service.

Effect 2: Increased employability of the youth

As for most ECOWAS volunteers, the Programme positively impacted on their own and professional development.

Their own development

- They now know the host country and its people better.
- They developed good relationships with their colleagues and the population
- They serve another member State of ECOWAS

Professional development

- They consolidated their experience with respect to the culture of peace, good governance and development
- They improved their knowledge about leadership, human resource management, conflict management, team training and management
- They better grasp the significance of the concepts of tolerance and acceptance of diversity, whether religious, ethnic, cultural, political, and of gender, and they know how to manage it
- They are familiar with other voluntary work experiences, especially through their interactions with the volunteers of the United Nations, the Peace Corps, JICA, France Volontaires and local volunteers
- They developed the spirit of voluntary work through their involvement in voluntary activities and through the sacrifices they make for development to live
- They learnt from the experiences of other countries in the Sub region which came only in addition to their own experiences.
- French speaking volunteers in Sierra Leone are delighted at being able to speak English.

ECOWAS volunteers are also aware of the fact that, like their colleagues who worked in Liberia, they will benefit from a post duty training in entrepreneurship, project management, finance management, interviewing techniques and CV development. This training will improve their competitiveness in the job market.

Effect 3: Social fabrics strengthened through the fostering of peace

Much evidence has been collected in that regard. Answers are conclusive and very much satisfactory. The EVP has contributed to significant changes in the sectors of health, education and youth development. Schools and clinics which were experiencing a serious lack of skilled personnel were relieved by the EVP through volunteers whom many people describe as being talented and competent. Because of them, the rates of attendance in science subjects and French, and the rates of success in those subjects at State exams increased appreciably.

Students and their teachers who had never thought that they would speak French feel happy and proudly practice this language daily. In medical institutions, there has been a fall in young girls' early pregnancies, women pace births, there has been a decrease in maternal mortality in many communities and infections have decreased through new prevention methods. In Sierra Leone, dentist and optometrist volunteers rank among the best, if they are not indeed the best in the country. As a result, their hospital and clinic attendance rates rose considerably.

Effect 4: Community based projects aimed at improving living conditions have been developed and funded

A number of projects have been developed, but there has been no funding. This is the case of the project entitled "Implementing a mechanism for integrated waste and sanitation infrastructure management (Kindia-Guinea)" which was developed and submitted to technical and financial partners for funding. Some small projects were implemented through contributions from volunteers or resource persons mobilised by the volunteers themselves. This is the case for the purchase of one ambulance, a scanner and equipment for the Forécariah hospital in Guinea. This equally applies to awareness raising projects within the framework of sanitation and public hygiene, awareness raising on HIV/AIDS, talks on reproductive health and plans to organize cultural evenings or other events of public interest which were initiated and funded almost exclusively from their initiators' own capital. These types of projects were developed and implemented at more or less large scale in the two countries (Guinea and Sierra Leone).

However, the mission selected the following as community based lead projects aimed at improving living conditions:

- A sanitation project for the town of Kankan (Guinea) by the NGO known as Network for Alliance and friendship among the world youth for development (RAAJEUNET) which was developed with the assistance of the EVP. A funding amounting to GF244, 550,000 was obtained from the Programme entitled "Filets sociaux productifs" funded by the World Bank.
- A 4 hectare reforestation project on embankments in the Kankan Local District was developed with all members of the "Kankan Ville verte/Green Kankan (KVV)" NGO according to the framework of the Global Environment Fund explained by Volunteer

Anna Mar. The Project was developed in collaboration with the NGO named PROSMI and submitted to two partners who have already expressed interested: MFP/GEF – Micro finance Programme of the Global Environment Fund and F-PROSMI Conakry. KVV is currently a recognized dynamic field NGO. It was selected within the framework of the “Filets sociaux” Programme in Kankan and benefited from a funding of \$35,000.

- A project to produce maize, tomatoes and peanuts in Mathora (Sierra Leone): 50 young people in Mathora pooled their energies with resources provided by Volunteer Babucarr Jagne in order to farm a field of maize, tomatoes and peanuts. The harvest benefited the Mathora youth Association and the village community.
- A project aimed at mobilizing two first ladies from Guinea and Mali at Kouremaré (a border town) in order to raise the awareness of the communities in the cross border areas on the Ebola virus. The project was developed with the support of Volunteer Anna Mar in Kankan, but has not yet got any financing.

Effectiveness with respect to the outcome: unsatisfactory overall

The mission believes that the implementation of the Programme has not been effective, owing to many difficulties which nearly jeopardized the achievement of results. At each of its implementation step, the Programme was dotted with huge delays. In both Guinea and Sierra Leone, the process of recruiting volunteers was longer than expected. Such delays relate to various reasons, among which, last minute arrangements to motivate the members of the committees in charge of shortlisting applicants, whereas the Programme was not supposed to take this into account; the unavailability of selecting committees members according to the schedule agreed to, or sometimes unforeseen events, such as political instability in Mali which suddenly made it impossible to contact some of the applicants who were already retained for interviews scheduled to take place for deployments in Sierra Leone.

Volunteer deployments did not comply with the deadlines predetermined in the two countries, partly because of communication gaps in the host countries which resulted in the refusal to shoulder responsibility by the central ministries and their local host structures which were to take care of the accommodation of volunteers. In addition, securing volunteers’ accommodation was very slow and this led to frustration at all levels. The inefficiency of the National coordinating council made the situation even worse in Sierra Leone.

Ineffectiveness in the Programme implementation stemmed also from the complexity of the Programme decision making channels, as the files initiated by national councils must go through the Regional Council, the Youth and sports Development Centre, both of them being located in Ouagadougou, as well as through the United Nations Volunteers Programme as regards some financial files on the Programme’s financial resources in Bonn. As the Director of the Centre is the authorizing officer of the Programme budget, his absence or hesitation to approve some of

the files, seems to have caused delays in fund disbursements and/or the implementation or non-implementation of some of the activities.

Funds have neither been disbursed in due time, nor in full, since January 2014. For instance, nearly all of the activities scheduled in 2014 were hampered as a result of unavailability of funds and of the late arrival of allocations, which were inadequate.

Nevertheless, the mission notes professionalism in the management of the Programme's financial and material resources. Management books are well kept. The project manager in Bonn and the administrative and finance team of the Programme in Ouagadougou keep the accounts of expenditures on a regular basis; they inform the Regional Coordinating Council thereabout on the occasion of its meetings in Abuja; the acquisitions of the Programme are listed in a register kept in Bonn and Ouagadougou. In order to make transparency in resource management easy, the Regional Coordinating Office, through its administrative and finance officer, has access to the Atlas, a UNDP administrative and financial data processing tool, on equal footing as the project manager in Bonn; this tool enables it to follow all administrative and financial operations to the benefit of EVP.

With respect to human resource management, improved use of volunteers requires that their contracts be signed based on their true performance. However, it is not obvious that the renewals of their contracts rely on systematic performance evaluations, apart from feedbacks from volunteers' supervisors which are not checked.

Good relevance of the Programme

In the light of the beneficiary member States' development policies and strategies, the mission finds that the EVP is relevant in its vision to assist those post-conflict States, and which are in crisis, in laying the foundations of peace and development, especially by making low cost skilled human resources available in order to build grassroots community capacities in the critical sectors of education, health and development of youth organizations.

The EVP is also relevant as regards ECOWAS policies in so much as it is one of the essential links in the process of actually moving from an ECOWAS of States to an ECOWAS of the peoples ambitioned by the Commission from now to 2020.

The EVP is equally relevant in the light of programme mandate and priorities of the UNV. As it is a voluntary work Regional programme, it suitably meets the UNV concerns to get grassroots voluntary work popularized in terms of peace building and development activities across the world.

Finally, it is relevant with respect to the needs of the volunteers reception facilities, not only because it helps them meet their needs in education, health and development of youth organizations at reasonable cost, but also because it contributes to embed the values of unity in

diversity, of peaceful inter-ethnic cohabitation and joint responsibility to meet reconstruction and community development challenges together.

However, the mission finds that what has been called “Project Document” is but actually a proposal for the implementation of the EVP pilot phase put forward to ECOWAS by the UNV, under the memorandum of understanding signed by the two parties. This may explain some of the weaknesses in the project logical framework and implementation strategy which were not sufficiently clear and comprehensive for the nature of the project intervention to be better grasped and in order to make its monitoring-evaluation easy.

Potential for Programme sustainability: variable

The mission has determined two aspects under this heading: (1) the review of the potential of the sustainability of the activities and outcome of the Programme and, (2) the review of the potential of durability or sustainability of the Programme as a whole. As regards the first aspect, the mission finds that the two countries (Guinea and Sierra Leone) are not yet capable of conducting on their own the activities carried out with the EVP. Needs in human resources in the sectors of health, teaching of science subjects and of the French language, as well as in youth organizations capacity building are still pressing. The Ebola virus epidemic came to add to the seriousness of the situation by stopping activities.

With respect to the potential of sustainability of the Programme as a whole, the mission believes that such potential rests on three basic requirements to be met, namely: to ensure the Programme’s independence to make decisions; to make sure that member States conform to their commitments and to mobilize adequate resources to meet the ambitions of the Programme.

EVP satisfactory contribution to progress in peace, Regional integration and development

The Programme contributed tremendously to protect the essential values for peace building and furthering, such as “united we stand”, tolerance, collaboration, passion for work and solidarity. The gist per se of the EVP which wishes countries to have more expertise to share with the least well-off countries, is the proof of living solidarity.

ECOWAS volunteers settle conflicts, reconcile people with one another and therefore contribute to social cohesion in their schools, health centres and communities. The EVP filled wide gaps in crucial development sectors; its volunteers contribute to build capacities; they changed the dislike of science subjects and French into passion. State exam success rates in these subjects are now impressive.

Regional integration is a fact and the ECOWAS of the peoples is being embodied. 12 nationalities under the same roof, working together in order to contribute to the improvement of living conditions in a member State; they share experience and learn from one another. There are accounts of volunteers who got married among themselves or to nationals, who are imams/assistants in local mosques, accounts of Muslim volunteers who mix with Christians, and vice-versa.

There are accounts of volunteers who refused to be repatriated at a time when the Ebola fever epidemic was most severe arguing that they could not leave their brothers and sisters at a time when they mostly

needed them. In Sierra Leone, the ECOWAS which the population knew better was the military ECOWAS, through ECOMOG which pacified the country and brought it out of a long lasting war. The population is proud to discover today another facet of a local development ECOWAS which they embrace.

Factors which hindered the achievement of performance

a) Encouraging endogenous factors

- i. The stability of the Programme manager in Bonn has been very good for the project as a whole. He has become its trustee and institutional memory, having control on each related detail. The EVP management and administrative procedures Manual was revised twice¹; such revisions draw from the experience and lessons learnt from the Programme implementation.
- ii. The African Development Bank played a major role through its financial support without which the start-up of the Programme would have been hindered.
- iii. Information missions to post-conflict pilot countries yielded information which contributed to focus the Programme on the actual needs, as perceived by the grassroots communities rather than by decision makers. A grassroots approach decision making would have caused many difficulties to occur in the course of the implementation, even though the mission noted that these needs evolved as time went on.
- iv. The project development phase was interactive and transparent, characterized by broad-based talks with major stakeholders. This contributed to build consensus around the Programme.
- v. In the course of implementation, Government authorities, especially in Guinea, provided their very unflinching support to the Programme by helping to settle difficult issues, such as finding accommodation for volunteers.
- vi. The ECOWAS Commission showed very keen interest in the EVP. On expiry of the ADB financial support, the Commission did not take time before it shouldered full responsibility for the funding of the EVP, enabling it therefore to pursue its activities.

a) Disheartening endogenous factors

1. The Programme started with less than one third of the amount of its budget, while relying on resource mobilization in the future. This was a major risk for its implementation.
2. The EVP was meant to be self-reliant, to have actual decision making and management powers. However, in the course of its implementation, decision making and management power was given to the Youth and Sports Development Centre, which was supposed to merely

¹. The first version dates back to 2010; the Manual was first revised in 2012 and the second revision is currently underway for 2015.

- host it. Therefore, the EVP Regional coordinator was but a stooge. This situation resulted in much frustration within both the Regional Coordinating Office in Ouagadougou and National Councils in the field, and is believed to have caused delays as regards Programme implementation and failure to carry out the activities.
3. The beneficiary institutions were not prepared and there was lack of volunteers' host structures; volunteers were therefore left without decent accommodation for many weeks, even for months. This situation caused frustrations and delays, and did not make the volunteers quick integration easy.
 4. The late organization of volunteers' induction training: A six month delay in Guinea and a three month delay in Sierra Leone, contributed to serious perception difficulties on the part of volunteers, especially vis-à-vis the host country and the nature of their intervention. This delayed their integration.
 5. The lack of transparency in information: the culture of withholding information made the free flow of information difficult between/among the parties. In that context, the institutions of the Central Government which negotiated with ECOWAS did not communicate information resulting therefrom to host structures which were supposed to host volunteers. This lack of transparency in communication weakened, to some extent, the ability of the National system to find right solutions to issues relating to volunteers' accommodation.
 6. The lack or inadequacy of financial resources has been referred to as one of the major obstacles to the implementation of work plans, especially in order to ensure the monitoring of volunteers and the implementation of field activities.
 7. Administrative and financial procedures are believed to be slow and awkward with complicated decision making channels which lead, inter alia, to delays in fund disbursements.

b) Exogenous factors, constraints and challenges

- i. The Ebola epidemic stopped the Programme impetus and activities, leading to the quick evacuation of volunteers. Once they got back to Guinea, some of the volunteers faced serious accommodation problems as hospitals which were abandoned by patients could not collect the necessary income to contribute to the payment of their accommodation.
- ii. The EPV Regional Coordinating Office remains inadequately endowed with skilled staff to properly meet the numerous requirements of its mission. The procedure

of yearly renewal of minor contracts guarantees neither job security, nor the necessary motivation to dedicate oneself body and soul to the multiple tasks in the TOR.

- iii. The National compensation promised by host countries is often lacking, as budget constraints compels them to make sham commitments. The running costs of National coordinating councils are supposed to be paid by host countries but, actually, they request funds from ECOWAS.
- iv. Projects are developed by the ECOWAS volunteers jointly with local stakeholders, but there are no funds to make their financing and implementation easy. This situation creates frustration with NGOs, organizations and the ECOWAS volunteers who pool their energies and spend a lot of time on developing these projects.
- v. The lack of trained staff, equipment, medical items, teaching material and, of true libraries, impedes better care and treatment of the communities within the volunteers' host structures and host communities.
- vi. Hosting country coordinators within UNDP's offices was a stop-gap measure in a context in which member States could not have the necessary means for the easy start up and harmonious running of country coordinating councils. Nevertheless, this hosting within the resident offices of UNDP, caused a problem of identity to rise, as country coordinators tended to identify themselves more with UNDP than with ECOWAS. It is agreed that the hosting within UNDP was not out of the EVP decision.
- vii. As the Programme works in post conflict environments or in countries living in political crisis with a series of un-enabling conditions in most cases, its implementation strategy required active involvement, an unflinching commitment, close collaboration and effective coordination among the respective stakeholders involved in its implementation. This was obvious in a number of situations on the field. If weaknesses during the process of deployment of volunteers came to be known, the lack of collaboration and coordination at the various levels of the Programme responsibilities (Regional Council, National coordinating councils and country coordinating councils; host institutions and host structures), the emergency ECOWAS decision making process (Ebola crisis) did not make for enough consultation with National stakeholders in order to find commonly agreed solutions. This behaviour annoyed National stakeholders. The mission also notes that coordination between UNV and UNESCO is not obvious, except for the participation of the latter in the induction training workshop on the culture of peace. ECOWAS should have taken measures for much better

coordination between these two UN agencies involved in the EVP implementation.

Lessons learnt

Positive lessons

- The induction training enabled volunteers to better understand the difference between the notion of voluntary work and that of an international civil servant, in the same way as it put at their disposal theoretical and practical tools which afterwards made the success of their assignments easy.
- The EVP made ECOWAS better known, as many applicants came to National offices for information. It also made volunteers better known, as some of them got jobs with international organizations or scholarships.
- Volunteers have become resource persons contributing to the professionalization of their national colleagues and to the improvement of services within their host structures.
- The ECOWAS volunteers have succeeded in making difficulties associated with science subjects less mythical by teaching them shrewdness to study better and by referring to usual applications of these subjects in the lives of students.
- The guidance documents produced within the framework of the EVP pilot phase (EVP administrative management and procedures Manual, the volunteers Guide and the Guide for making funds available) contain best practices and provide reference frameworks for the administrative and finance management of the ECOWAS volunteers Programme. They therefore are archetypal tools for the Programme sustainability.

Negative lessons.

- The Programme's lack of decision making autonomy and its exclusive reliance on the EYSDC deprived the Regional coordination Office of its primary role which consists in managing the EVP, and thereby created leadership duality which merely resulted in confusion and slowed down the rate of implementation of activities.
- The holding of the volunteers induction training many months after their deployment, did not make their quick integration in host countries and host structures easy.
- Rigorous monitoring-evaluation of the Programme was hindered in so much as managers at all levels did not have the EVP implementation proposal which was used as project

document, so that they could immerse themselves with the results obtained and the impact expected, as well as with their possible success indicators.

- There must be involvement in a pilot project so as to further experimentation, learning and flexibility. But the complicated decision making channel of the EVP did not make such flexibility easy.
- The dismissal of a few volunteers for lack of discipline in the course of implementation showed that the recruitment process did not pay attention to the applicants' morals inquiry.
- The lack of basic working materials within the host structures tend to create frustration for volunteers who fear that their efforts might be ruined by such shortages.
- ECOWAS decision making process during the Ebola crisis did not further consultations with National stakeholders to jointly find commonly agreed solutions in order to ensure volunteers' security. This led to countries' annoyance.

Recommendations on the extension of the Programme.

a) To ECOWAS and the UNV

On the project development phase

In order to make Programme ownership easy, the draft programme or Agency (see hereafter) should be developed with the active involvement of host countries and volunteers host structures. When there are National volunteers' platforms, they may be identified and their roles must be defined at this juncture.

On implementation.

1. Like all famous volunteers organizations throughout the world, (UNV, Peace Corps, etc.), the EVP must be autonomous as regards decision making, and administrative and finance management. This is a sine qua non condition for its long term viability. Placing the Programme under the Youth and Sports Development Centre to become the latter's division having to compete with other divisions with respect to resources, whereas the Programme budgetary appropriations should be higher than those of the Centre, is not the right way to guarantee its long term visibility and viability. A cross cutting programme encompassing the activities of all of the departments of the Commission and of its sister institutions must enjoy actual management autonomy.

2. The EVP may be given a special status in the form of ECOWAS Volunteers Agency with the mission of fostering Regional integration, peace and development, through voluntary work. The EVP, by so doing, may assess the scope of its Regional dimension, speak in favour of the integration of voluntary work into the development process and assist member States in developing National voluntary work programmes. The programme manager may be called ‘Director’. The current name of Regional Coordinator may be kept, because what matters most is to make sure that the Programme officer exercises true decision and management powers.
3. This new entity will be fully integrated into the ECOWAS Commission, will get specific budgetary appropriations and will be empowered to raise additional external funds to support its activities.
4. As an autonomous agency of the Commission (decision making autonomy), it should have a strategic plan ranging from 5 to 10 years. The objective of the strategic Plan is to give a guiding or strategic orientation to the action of the Commission in terms of Regional voluntary work for the improved traceability of results and better consistency in interventions. This plan will highlight, inter alia,: the vision pursued, the key strategic objectives, priority intervention areas, major results, major activities, in order to implement them, as well as the estimated amount of resources needed (available or to be mobilised). The plan will be accompanied with a result matrix to make its monitoring-evaluation easy, and with risk reduction strategies.
5. The new agency or the Regional Coordinating Office will be responsible for the technical, administrative and finance management of the Programme. The council will be endowed with permanent staff members who will be governed by ECOWAS procedures and regulations. In order to reduce costs, part of staff members may be composed of ECOWAS volunteers with stable contracts.
6. Country coordinators (CCs) may be recruited from among former ECOWAS volunteers who, however, have good experience in administrative and human resource management. CCs should have clear decision making powers on operational issues falling within their competence. They should be given an adequate budget to implement the local work plans, including the financing of the Programme’s micro projects and monitoring-evaluation activities.
7. It would be better to review the composition of the National coordinating council to make it become more efficient. It should not include more than 6 members. Its members should mainly be the representatives of the Programme beneficiary institutions, the focal Point of

ECOWAS in the country being its chairperson. Members of the NCC should participate in the volunteers' induction training sessions and should have good knowledge of the volunteers Procedures Manual.

8. Pre-deployment missions well developed by the ECOWAS volunteers Agency should be conducted with the participation of host institutions and host structures to make sure that decent accommodation is available. When this condition is not met, any other structure which meets this condition may be considered.
9. Otherwise, a monthly accommodation allowance may be provided for and given to each volunteer to take care of his/her accommodation.
10. The ECOWAS volunteers should be put in conditions which make them competitive compared to other volunteers. It would therefore be better to reconsider their subsistence allowance in the light not only of the cost of living, but also of what other volunteers organizations pay.
11. A standardized allowance structure may be planned for all volunteers, with a special premium provided for predetermined professional groups in order to attract them (for example: physicians, engineers, etc.).
12. The ECOWAS volunteers should be given relevant information about conditions in host countries and about their status of volunteers before they are deployed on the field. It must be clearly indicated that they are not international civil servants. When they are appointed to work in underequipped communities (characterized by serious lack of drinking water, electricity and basic material to ensure the smooth running of their structures), they must specifically also be informed about that.
13. Facing many needs and in the light of small budgetary resources, most organizations and countries in the world undertook to develop strategies in order to diversify their partnerships and have access to emergent funding sources, including private foundations, firms, the Diaspora, emergent countries, etc. In that regard, the Agency should not only have a resource mobilization proactive strategy, but it should equally use institutions which benefit from its activities for the latter to do advocacy for the Programme with their bilateral and multilateral partners, and to mobilize sizeable resources (see also above, as regards member States).
14. The Programme should look at the possibility of including all age brackets in order to give them the opportunity to put their expertise at the disposal of the Sub-region.

15. Pending the time when the ECOWAS volunteers Agency is able to build the volunteers' finance management capacities, the Agency may sub-contract to the UNV the service of payment of volunteers.

b) To ECOWAS member States benefiting from the Programme

- Considering that the Programme or the Agency meets their priority development needs, they should conform to their commitments such as their implementation cost sharing, especially with respect to the volunteers' accommodation.
- In order to make for the raising of additional resources so that they can fully meet their funding needs, they may do advocacy for the Agency and its activities in the country with their technical financial, bilateral and multilateral, partners.

c) To the UNV

If we were to redesign the same Programme or develop a similar project:

- We would ensure that all possible stakeholders are taken into account while the project is being developed, including volunteers host structures.
- We would provide for a full performance framework while making sure that the impacts selected are credible with relevant performance indicators. From the perspective of Performance Based Management (PBM), no result is convincing unless it can be proved or measured. We must therefore make sure in the future that performance indicators are relevant and measurable. These performance indicators must be known before hand by all partners.