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PUTTING VOLUNTEER WORK ON THE ECONOMIC MAP OF THE WORLD
Johns Hopkins, International Labour Organization, and United Nations Join Forces

The International Labour Organization and the Johns Hopkins University Center for Civil Society Studies today announced an agreement to develop an approach for putting volunteer work on the economic map of the world for the first time.

Also announced was a start-up grant from the United Nations Volunteers to help underwrite this effort. Administered by the U.N. Development Programme, UNV is the focal point in the United Nations for the worldwide promotion of volunteerism.

"Volunteerism is one of the great renewable resources for social problem-solving around the world," said Lester M. Salamon, director of the Center for Civil Society Studies within the Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies. "Yet its scale and impact have never been fully measured."

"The work of volunteers is one aspect of labor that has not been covered adequately in statistical systems up to now," said Sylvester Young, director of the Bureau of Statistics of the International Labour Organization. "Such work has been growing in importance in both developed and developing countries, but its statistical measurement has been overlooked."

The new partnership between ILO and the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies promises to overcome this problem by developing a recommended procedure for measuring volunteer work through official labor force surveys in countries throughout the world, fulfilling a mandate established in a 2003 U.N. Statistics Division *Handbook on Nonprofit Institutions in the System of National Accounts*. This procedure will be presented to the International Conference of Labour Statisticians in Geneva, Switzerland, in December 2008.

"Volunteers play an enormous role in improving health, preparing for and responding to disasters, and promoting development throughout the world," said Ad de Raad, UNV executive coordinator. "We believe this new partnership between Johns Hopkins and the ILO will finally provide a systematic way to document this significant expression of civic engagement."

"ILO is delighted to be collaborating with Johns Hopkins on this initiative," ILO's Sylvester Young said. "The Hopkins center is uniquely qualified to assist in this task by virtue of its pioneering work in measuring volunteering and civil society development throughout the world."

About the center:

The Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies seeks to improve understanding and the effective functioning of not-for-profit, philanthropic, or "civil society" organizations in the United States and throughout the world in order to enhance the contribution these organizations can make to democracy and the quality of human life. The center is part of the Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies and carries out its work through a combination of research, training, and information-sharing both domestically and internationally. More information on the center is available at <http://www.jhu.edu/ccss>.

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