**UNV programme mourns the deaths of two volunteers in Afghanistan**

Source: [United Nations Volunteers (UNV)](http://www.unv.org/)

Date: 28 Oct 2009

**Kabul, Afghanistan:** The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is deeply saddened by the tragic deaths of two UNV volunteers, Ms. Jossie G. Esto, 40, from the Philippines, and Ms. Yah-Lydia Wonyene, 47, from Liberia, who were killed in an armed attack on a United Nations guest house in Kabul, Afghanistan today.

The attack killed three other United Nations personnel and wounded several others, including a UNV volunteer.

The Executive Coordinator of UNV, Ms. Flavia Pansieri, expressed condolences on behalf of the organization's 8,000 volunteers and staff to the families of the two UNV volunteers. She noted that the two women were in Afghanistan to support democratic elections. "Jossie and Lydia dedicated their knowledge and experience as volunteers to support the people of Afghanistan. As volunteers, they demonstrated a true commitment to the cause of peace and development and their sacrifice will not be forgotten."

United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon condemned the "cowardly attack" in the strongest possible terms and conveyed his deepest condolences to the families and friends of the victims "who were viciously killed as they sought to serve the people of Afghanistan".

Ms. Wonyene was assigned to UNDP/ELECT as an Electoral Outreach and Training Coordinator. She had previously served as a UNV volunteer in Timor-Leste and in Sierra Leone. After some years in administration at a telecommunications company, she had worked as a registration and electoral supervisor in her home country. She had been in Afghanistan for exactly one year and is survived by five children aged from six to 29 years old and one granddaughter, aged four years.

Ms. Esto was serving as an Electoral Outreach and Training Coordinator and had been in Afghanistan for just over a year. Prior to serving in Afghanistan, she was a UNV volunteer in Liberia, Timor-Leste and Nepal. Originally a school teacher, during the 1990s she worked as an Electoral Officer and Civic Education Officer in the Philippines. Ms. Esto was married and leaves a daughter aged 14 years and a son aged 12 years.

The two UNV volunteers were supporting the work of UNDP/ELECT, which is the primary vehicle through which the international community supports elections in Afghanistan. Working closely with electoral bodies such as the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan, UNDP/ELECT provides project and programme design and management, mobilization of donor funding, activity coordination, reporting and the channelling of funds for electoral support.

Deputy Executive Coordinator Ms. Naheed Haque spoke with the families of both UNV volunteers to communicate UNV's sincere condolences and ongoing support. "This is a terrible tragedy and a devastating loss for their families. We mourn with them the loss of two very committed and talented individuals who were an important part of the UNV team and UNDP operations in Afghanistan," she said.

The United Nations Volunteers programme is the UN organization that promotes volunteerism to support peace and development worldwide. Volunteerism can transform the pace and nature of development and it benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer. UNV contributes to peace and development by advocating for volunteerism globally, encouraging partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing volunteers.