STRUCTURE FOR VOLUNTEER GROUPS ALLIANCE

1. Background

1.1 Following the achievements of the Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group between 2013-2016, including the recognition of **Volunteer Groups** by the UN HLPF, a strategy paper was developed by the Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group on its role for the future. This was presented to the Board of the International Forum for Volunteering in Development (Forum), the founder of the group in 2012, and to IAVE, UNV and other member organisations.

1.2 It was agreed that the group should be more formally constituted, that the name should be changed following the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), that efforts would be made to increase the number and diversity of members, and a small group of representatives of member organisations would meet in Bonn on 1 March 2016 to develop an Annual Plan based on the Strategy paper, the Tokyo Call to Action, the General Assembly resolution 70/129, the Plan of Action for integrating volunteering in the next decade and beyond and other relevant documents.

2. Basic Principles
The Volunteer Groups Alliance (VGA) is made up of organisations involved in volunteering in national, regional and international contexts, including NGOs, Government Agencies and private sector companies - who among other things contribute to the development and specifically to the achievement of the SDGs. The work of the VGA is to enable organisations, both cross border and non-cross border entities, who contribute to sustainable development through volunteering across the globe to collaborate, share and influence collectively at the national, regional and international levels. The work of the VGA is not meant for the benefit of any particular individual group. It is not a legally constituted entity but a collaborative group that seeks funding from its members.

The VGA is an independent group, and reports or minutes of the meetings will be sent to Members, who are expected to inform their organisations through regular reports on progress and decisions taken by the VGA.

3. Intended outcomes:
The action plan of the Volunteer Groups Alliance will be updated on a regular basis to include:
   i. Engagement with the UN system
   ii. Engagement at the national level
   iii. Engagement at the regional level
   iv. Building a mandate and engaging other actors
   v. Telling the story (Contribution to the SDGs)
   vi. Resourcing

4. Membership

4.1 Eligibility
Member organisations must be organisations with a demonstrable commitment to volunteering, nationally and/or internationally, through their mission, goals and activities. They are expected to support the principles, values and objectives of the VGA.

4.2 Applications for membership will be made to the VGA Coordinator.

5. Structure

5.1 The VGA will consist of all its members, and will be supported by a Coordinator, based in New York unless during a transition period, and Co-Chairs elected from and by the membership.

All members of the VGA will receive regular updates and information, and be consulted on significant decisions, within a reasonable time frame as much as possible. Members will be encouraged to send relevant data, information, ideas, examples of best practice and suggestions to the VGA Coordinator. They will also be invited to participate in events and activities, although these will be at their own expense**.**

Members will inform the Coordinator when they change their representative and changes in contact details**.** Where possible they will contribute in-kind resources such as technical expertise, time, networking, media assistance and funding.

5.2 Task Groups
Members of Task Groups will be nominated by those organisations that wish to be represented in regular monthly teleconferences and involved in a number of activities individually or collectively, including the drafting of documents, responses to surveys, planning, mapping, research and other evidence-based advocacy activities**.** Members of the task groups are expected to dedicate a minimum of 4 hours a month to the specific work.

5.3 Co-Chairs
The co-chairs will be elected by the membership. To ensure continuity, co-chairs' terms will be staggered, and elections held every six months. Guidelines for elections include:

- All member organisations of the VGA can nominate a Co-Chair for election
- It is possible to nominate a Co-Chair from one's own organisation
- A nominee shall agree to be nominated
- Each nominee shall submit a half-page "campaign note," with basic bio-data and qualifications, explain why they want to stand for election, and what they would like to achieve with the VGA in the coming year if elected
- A diversity of nominations is encouraged

- It is possible to be re-elected once. A person serving two consecutive years in the position cannot stand for election again until one year later.
- If for any reason it is necessary for an elected Co-Chair to step down from the position before the period ends, a new election can be held earlier than normal, and the functional period for the new Co-Chair prolonged accordingly.

6.   Communication

The Alliance members will communicate primarily through email, monthly teleconferences and smaller project task groups. The costs of teleconferences will be met from the budget held by an organization who is willing to offer, in-kind, the group use the technology they already use in their organization. It is necessary to make sure that the technology is accessible to members located in all countries of the world.

7.   Decision making

When a significant decision is to be made, the members of the VGA will be given the opportunity to comment within a specific time frame. A non-reply will be taken to indicate support.

Members' names will not be added to specific documents without their approval.

Decisions by the membership will be made as far as possible by consensus, but a vote will be taken if necessary.

8.   Coordinator

The key funders have provided resources for a Volunteer Groups Alliance Coordinator to be located in New York, and to contribute to the costs of teleconferences, and additional support from Forum's secretariat/coordinators.

The Coordinator reports to the Chair/co-chairs.