



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman

For Immediate Release
2010/405

April 8, 2010

MEDIA NOTE

**International Visitors Experience U.S. Volunteerism Firsthand in
“Volunteerism: United We Serve” Project, April 12-30**

The U.S. Department of State’s “Volunteerism: United We Serve” project brings 100 community activists, government officials, nongovernmental organization leaders, educators and journalists from around the world to experience volunteerism in the United States from April 12-30. Inspired by the call from President Obama for renewed commitment to public service, this people-to-people exchange initiative of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs’ (ECA) International Visitor Leadership Program will highlight America’s vibrant volunteer spirit and demonstrate the importance of civic participation in developing a strong civil society. This project was designed and coordinated by Meridian International Center and is enhanced through public-private partnerships with Visa Inc., Oracle, Intel and the Catherine B. Reynolds Foundation.

The 100 Volunteerism International Visitors will work with volunteer organizations in 56 cities across the United States before reuniting in San Francisco to learn about corporate social responsibility and volunteer with employees of Oracle on a project arranged by Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. First Lady of California Maria Shriver will conduct an interview panel with selected participants on April 29.

In cities and towns spanning the country, the 100 Volunteerism International Visitors will visit charitable foundations, non-profits, faith-based organizations, community groups and corporations. They will examine the impact of volunteerism in U.S. communities and how volunteers of all ages and backgrounds foster a culture of service and civic responsibility; learn best practices in volunteer recruitment, retention and management; examine the impact of corporate social responsibility, social entrepreneurship and technology in developing new avenues for civic engagement and participation; and, participate in community service activities.

The participants will meet with senior Department of State officials during the project orientation in Washington, D.C. April 12-16. They will also take part in a volunteer service event on April 16 with George Washington University students, who have worked this year to complete 100,000 hours of community service in response to a challenge from First Lady Michelle Obama.

The International Visitors will travel in four groups for parallel programs in Houston, Indianapolis, Kansas City and Salt Lake City April 17-21 to explore best practices in volunteer management. Then 50 two-person teams will travel to fifty cities across the United States April 22-26 to take part in volunteer activities within U.S. communities, timed to coincide with Earth Day 2010 (April 22) and Global Youth Service Days 2010 (April 24-26).

**Embassy of the United States of America
Khartoum, Sudan**

25). Each participant will perform an estimated 15 to 20 hours—collectively up to 2,000 hours—of volunteer service.

The Volunteerism International Visitors will reunite in San Francisco April 26-30, where they will attend an April 27 symposium sponsored by lead partner Visa Inc. focused on corporate social responsibility, social entrepreneurship, micro-financing, and the role of state government in advancing civic engagement. Karen Baker, California Secretary of Service and Volunteering, will present at the symposium's Plenary Session. The participants will also volunteer alongside employees of Oracle on a project arranged by Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. First Lady of California Maria Shriver will conduct an interview panel with selected participants on April 29.

The International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), <http://exchanges.state.gov/ivlp/ivlp.html>, of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs annually brings over 4,500 potential or established leaders to the United States from around the world for professional projects with U.S. peers and for firsthand experience of American society and culture. Over 320 current and former chiefs of state and heads of government and many other distinguished world leaders in the public and private sectors have participated in the program, which this year celebrates its 70th anniversary.

Media Contacts: Catherine Stearns 202-632-6437 or StearnsCL@state.gov
 Laura Tischler 202-632-6454 or TischlerLL@state.gov

###