



ONLINE VOLUNTEER NOMINATED FOR THE UNV ONLINE VOLUNTEERING AWARD 2013

Nomination submitted by UNDP Guinea-Bissau:

Two full-sized Global Environmental Facility (GEF) projects did not have a designated translator so it was very challenging to technically review and comment on documents. Hence, the team of translators provided an invaluable service in translating important project (e.g. Annual Work Plans, Progress Reports) and work-related documents.

The team of online volunteers provided an invaluable service during one of the most turbulent years in the history of the country – there was a violent military-backed coup d'état of the constitutional government in April 2012. We have engaged this team for more than 36 different and unique translations tasks in the past year and two ministries and UNDP have benefited directly from their collaboration. We hope these volunteers have gained a better understanding of what it takes to run large-scale biodiversity conservation and climate change – adaptation projects in West Africa and will be inspired to be more actively engaged in these environmental exigencies of our times.

Tom Shaw (Ireland/UK):



I am a humanitarian aid worker by profession, having previously served in Afghanistan, DRC, and Guinea-Bissau. In July 2011, my life changed completely when I broke my neck in an accident which left me paralyzed below the shoulders. I was repatriated and I am now undergoing intensive physical rehabilitation. The accident was a massive blow to me, but the opportunity for me to continue to offer my skills online has been very important and rewarding to me in many ways. It enabled me to remain connected to my passions, despite my severe physical disabilities, using voice recognition technology to undertake the assignments. I'm able to balance these commitments with my physical rehabilitation activities, helping me keep my mind active and focused too. Volunteering has actually given me the confidence to make the transition back to work, proving to myself that I can still work effectively with assistive technology, meet deadlines and build positive working relationships remotely.